





A fine and elegant French 18th Century Poudreuse of Louis XV design in tulip wood with contemporary ormolu mounts.
The centre flap lifts to reveal a looking glass and the side ones fold outwards forming an open top.

Width 33½ inches. Depth 19½ inches. Height 29½ inches.

Founded
1668

KEEBLE LTD

Telephone
MAYfair 5922

4, AUDLEY SQUARE, SOUTH AUDLEY STREET, W.1

Established decorators and furniture makers in the time of Charles II.

APOLLO

EDITOR: W. R. JEUDWINE

The Magazine of the Arts for Connoisseurs and Collectors

*Articles appearing in APOLLO Magazine are the copyright of Apollo Magazine
Ltd. Reproductions in whole or in part without previous consent is forbidden*

Five Shillings
Annual Subscription £3 17 6
Volume LXVI. No. 392

CONTENTS

\$1
Annual Subscription \$14
October, 1957

	PAGE
Current Shows and Comments. By HORACE SHIPP	67
Chinese Works of Art in English Collections: A Selection from the Seligman Collection. By E. E. BLUETT	69
An Introduction to Abstract Painting. By JOHN PROSSOR	74
Recent Developments in Painting. By W. R. JEUDWINE	88
Conversation Pieces in Search of a Painter. By RALPH EDWARDS	90
A Shaft from Apollo's Bow	94
Ceramic Causerie	95
The Autumn Antiques Fair, Chelsea	96
The Library Shelf	100
Sale Room Notes	105

ON COVER

O. DEBRE. Green Composition 1957
Galerie Michel Warren, 10 Rue des Beaux Arts, Paris, 6

*The Editor welcomes articles and photographs and correspondence on Art and Collector topics interesting to Collectors and Art
Lovers. The subjects include paintings, prints, silver, furniture, ceramics, fire-arms, miniatures, glass, pewter, jade, sculpture,
etc., Occidental and Oriental. Articles should be sent to the Editor, APOLLO, 10, Vigo St., London, W.1.*

10 VIGO STREET, REGENT STREET, LONDON, W.1

Telephone: Regent 1084-5

Paris Agent :
Société Nationale de Publicité,
11, Boulevard des Italiens.

New York Agent :
B. Mastai,
23, East 57th Street.

This picture is painted on wood, size $29\frac{1}{4} \times 23\frac{1}{4}$. It is in my opinion a genuine work of Antony Van Dyck. It is painted in the Master's style of what is called "the second Antwerp period" with thin material in the background and the shadows, and thicker material in face and armour.

George, Lord Goring was the son of George Goring, Earl of Norwich, born 1508. After his marriage with Lettice, third daughter of Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork, his father-in-law purchased for him Lord Vere's port in the Dutch service. It was during his stay in the Low Countries that Van Dyck painted this portrait of him.

(Signed) Leo van Puyvelde.



NORBERT FISCHMAN GALLERY

OLD MASTERS

26 OLD BOND STREET, LONDON, W.1

Tel: Hyde Park 5744

Established 1905

Cables: Norfishart, London

Stewart Acton & Sons

(BRIGHTON) LTD.

(Members of the British Antique Dealers' Association Ltd.)



Genuine Antiques

PERIOD FURNITURE,
PORCELAIN, GLASS, PICTURES,
Etc.

TRADE SPECIALLY INVITED

12, Prince Albert Street, Brighton, 1

Telephone: BRIGHTON 25619

Specialist in Antique
TAPESTRIES EMBROIDERIES
SILK BROCADES VELVETS
NEEDLEWORK

E. B. SOUHAMI

6c, PRINCES ARCADE, PICCADILLY,
LONDON, S.W.1

Regent 7196

CURRENT SHOWS AND COMMENTS

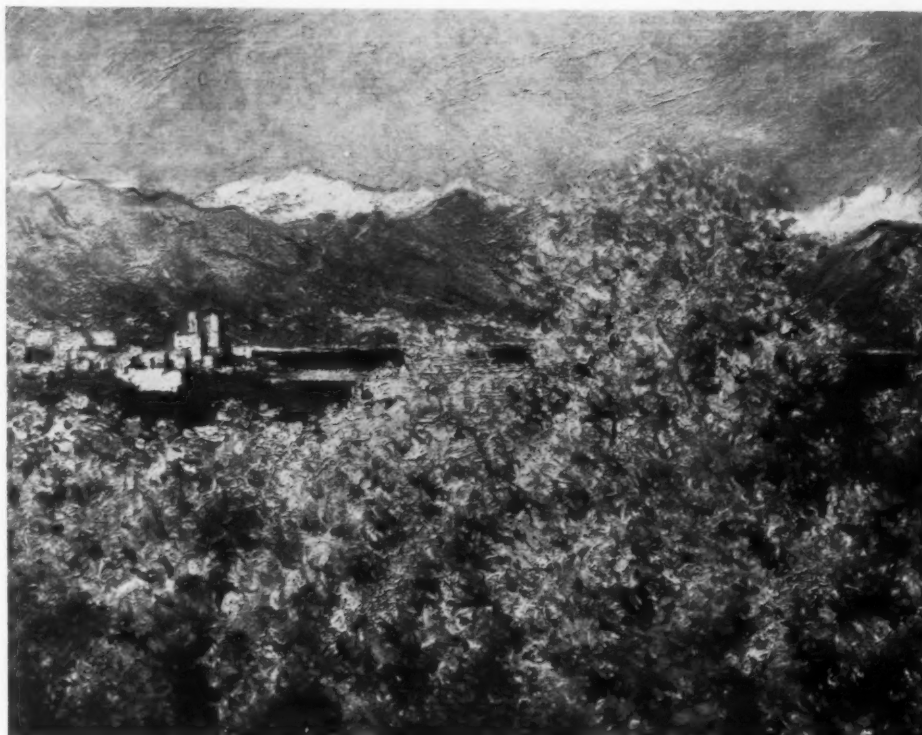
MONET: LORD OF LIGHT

By HORACE SHIPP

BY that excellent arrangement of the Arts Council, under which the major art exhibition of the Edinburgh Festival each year is transferred to the Tate Gallery, London is enjoying the breathtaking beauty of Monet. In face of this one hundred and fifteen works we are able to make a new appraisal for which the time is now ripe. "Only an eye," Cézanne's too often quoted denigration—too often, at least without the balancing, "But, my God, what an eye!"—has served for nearly four decades to damn Monet and with him the Impressionism of which he is the most integrated exponent. Now that painting has followed the School of Paris to the very end of the cul-de-sac until an artist has become Only a hand, (and, my God, what a hand!) we may well retrace our steps to Monet.

Douglas Cooper, in an introductory essay in the catalogue which is a model of the lucid guidance needed and too rarely found in exhibition catalogues, is at pains to debunk the current nonsense in aesthetics which would claim Monet as a pioneer Tachiste on the evidence of the "Nymphéas" of the final years. The five of these works in the exhibition are at once the ultimate logic and the tragedy of the octogenarian artist: the ultimate logic in their conception, for the study of the effect of light on form and colour, its reflection and refraction in the surface of the lily pond, was the Ultima Thule of that voyage which had occupied all his life; the final tragedy, since when he painted these he was all but blinded by cataract. So, unfinished, ruined by his efforts to use still the eyes that had betrayed him, retouched until Clemenceau almost forbade further spoliation, the "Nymphéas" signify the closing eyes of this "Old Man mad with Painting," but faithful still to the theory diametrically opposed to contemporary Action Painting. Douglas Cooper is right to castigate, as he does, Alfred Barr of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and those who have followed his impertinent claim. There may be an argument for Action Painting, but it is not Monet's pioneering example.

Douglas Cooper's other stricture is upon the theory that Monet himself was much indebted to the Turners and Constables which he saw here when he took asylum from the Franco-Prussian war in 1871. On the evidence of this exhibition he is perhaps justified, and his comment "Monet's discovery of the British . . . landscapists no doubt encouraged him to continue in his own style of painting, for he was gratified to find that other painters had shared his interest in light, atmosphere, and *plein air* effects." I would say that this is the understatement of so pronounced an art Francophile as Professor Cooper, but it may well be that we



Courtesy: O'Hara Gallery

VIEW OF ANTIBES FROM THE GARDENS OF LA SALIS. BY MONET.

From the Monet Exhibition at the Tate Gallery.

art historians are all too prone to emphasize derivations. Constable and Bonington had clearly made their contribution to the cult of natural landscape in France in 1824, and if the preoccupation of Turner with the elements of light, air, fire, and water confirmed rather than created Monet's own preoccupation with the effects of light it is enough. Given Monet's genius for absorbing every influence which sanctioned the afflatus of his magnificent prejudice, he could not but have been helped by the discovery that before he was born Turner had called a picture "Light and Colour."

For that is Monet's credo; that his search. If the exquisitely beautiful "Magpie" or the finished canvases of the bathing place, "La Grenouillère" were painted in 1869, his Impressionism was established before the English visit. For in these the reflection of light into the snow shadows and on the water is clearly his main concern and is already mastered. I would say, however, that those dates for these pictures are too early, and that his purpose and practice did greatly mature at the time of the English visit.

It does not matter, however; nothing matters in face of this overwhelming outpouring of beauty except the beauty itself, the artist's consecration to it, the development of eye, hand and mind which enabled Claude Monet to achieve that perfect tension between nature and art which here we see. Every phase of that development is revealed, and even two of those teen-age caricatures which were his false if profitable start until the meeting with Boudin which convinced him against himself of the path he should take. As he moves onward from the stolid Still Lifes to Barbizon school naturalism, to his own destined world of light; through the challenging series of the haystacks, the cathedrals, and the rest, to the final essay of the light, leaves, and water of the

Nymphéas, he never swerves from that quest. He can take from a score of his fellow artists, yet remains himself, and repays his debts a thousandfold. It is not sentimental to ascribe a degree of saintliness to such consecration and complete integration, for this man consciously chose and accepted poverty, negligence, obloquy, that he might remain true to his vision.

One other word should be said since this exhibition so abundantly demonstrates it: that Monet despite his preoccupation with light was also a master of form. He renders the form which light itself creates, but he never is slovenly nor indifferent. As a result, each locality he visits, each person he portrays, is true and utterly convincing. His humility before his subject, his determination to see it as itself at that moment, is itself a spiritual quality of character. That this exhibition will establish a revaluation of Monet, I for one cannot doubt; and that revaluation is not only of Monet the artist, but of Monet the man.

STANDARDS AND THE CRITIC

The trouble with giants is that all beside them appear pygmies, even men of quite considerable stature, and after such an exhibition we have to readjust our standards back again to the common measure. When, therefore, we go to Tooth's to see in "Critic's Choice" what a contemporary critic of eminence adjudges the best of our living British artists we must almost forget Monet. Perhaps that should be qualified, for strictures of arbitrary age groups, wall space, and—one judges—the willingness of available artists narrows the choice. Despite this, Nevile Wallis, this year's willing victim of Tooth's challenge to critics, has made a happy, because varied, selection. Catholicity is the keynote. Matthew Smith, that near-octogenarian, is the doyen of the occasion. His "Jeune Femme" painted in 1930, luscious as his "Pomegranates" of 1952, contrasts amusingly with the attenuated, low-toned and depressingly colourless "Standing Nude" of the all-but-youngest contributor, Anthony Fry. I confess that I did not find Anthony Fry's work at all attractive, but it may not be fair to judge him by four paintings, and when he has his first one-man show at the Leicester Galleries in November the qualities which prompted Mr. Wallis's choice may emerge. Alan Reynolds, on the other hand, is individual; and, in his large "Novemberscape" thrilling underlying draughtsmanship and an inherent poetry of vision more than justify his inclusion. The other accent on youth is the Staining Painting of Robyn Denny in the latest modern manner. This is Mr. Wallis's pinch of incense on the modernist altar. To me the best of this kind are but splodges, and though Nevile Wallis defends his champion with his customary kindness, I remain unmoved. I suspect that he, too, really delights in the technical brilliance of Edward Burra's sinister symbolism and even more of Ruskin Spear in all his moods. Certainly the "Black Rock" landscape, in its painterly qualities, its organization, its cool grandeur, gives us all we need ask of a painting. Spear can put a huddle of brightly coloured deck-chairs in the corner of a canvas otherwise given over to the expanse of a pebbled beach and blue sky, a breaking line of distant wave, and there is realism, abstraction, tachisme, impressionism, and all the rest in one satisfying synthesis. I would not have included the "My Goodness, my Guinness" picture which attempts these qualities plus that kind of laughter at the local which he affects. Altogether, however, an interesting choice by a critic to whom painting is a delight rather than the illustration of one fiercely held theory.

REALISM OVERREACHING ITSELF

Realism, which has a direct line in English painting stretching back through Ruskin Spear and Sickert, the Euston Road Group, the Camden Town Group ultimately to Hogarth, manifests itself nowadays also as a reaction from the French inspired anti-realism of recent decades. In this vein it can be seen at its most brutal in the work of John

Bratby at the Beaux Arts Gallery. Included in the 1956 Venice Biennale he won the Guggenheim National Award. This, his fourth one-man show, exemplifies all his virtues and vices. The former include an unfailing inventiveness, the use of a lively linear pattern of thick pigment to express all that comes within his deliberately indiscriminate vision, and an individuality arising from this. The latter is chiefly his preoccupation with ugliness for its own sake. If beauty buys no beef, as the saying goes, ugliness may; and those interiors where his wife and child stand nude and crude amid surroundings of calculated untidiness and squalor exploit the hope. The long horizontal window shapes, with their series of dividing verticals and the glimpse of the world beyond the panes do give a certain beauty of illumination and pattern, but the distorted presence of Jean incongruously playing monopoly without any clothes on takes the eye as it is meant to do. Jean at the fireplace is even more repulsive; and the artist's cloacal obsession, though a little more restrained than it once was, is still manifest. Bratby can paint; and I hope the day will come when he abandons these shock tactics and dares to depend upon beauty, which is as much a reality as ugliness. Monet proves that at least.

ESSAYS IN THE NUDE

Nevertheless, it is one of our Neo-Realists, Jack Smith, who at an exhibition called "The Contemporary Nude," at Gallery One is almost the only artist to justify the title. For the rest—if we except Sidney Nolan, whose unclothed Mrs. Fraser has intermittently been a feature of his Australian scenery and *mythos*—the Nude has so disappeared into a welter of paint, or an interrelationship of line and form that the pictures have little figurative significance.

This use of the nude female form as the merest starting point for an excursion in modernist style is also the note of the large exhibition of the work of Henri Laurens at the Marlborough Fine Art Galleries. Laurens is at his most interesting when in the years before the first world war he was influenced to Cubism by Picasso and Braque, and his work in low relief took on a pictorial quality of that nature. Since then it turned to curvilinear distortion and that conception of sculpture as interrelated holes and lumps which governs Henry Moore's bronzes. This distortion, allied to the resemblance to the human form, I personally find utterly disconcerting and displeasing; and whatever may be the justification as abstraction in space the later sculptures and drawings of Henri Laurens are for me just plain ugly. This retrospective exhibition of more than seventy works gives an ample survey of his work of all periods.

SOME NOTES IN PASSING

Almost at the other extreme, too careful, too conscientious, but deserving more attention than it received, was the exhibition of "Outdoor Subjects in Oils," by Charles Leek, at Cooling Galleries. Mr. Leek paints chiefly the farm and forest horses and the New Forest where he lives. Both animals and trees are studied anatomically. His shadows are sometimes too heavy (he should look at Monet); but a publisher seeking a solid illustrator, or the transport authorities wanting a poster might well use his gifts.

The amateurs have had a field month. Children's art occupied the large R.I. Galleries and stretched as usual from the naïve to the nice, the nasty and the nauseating. Forgive us if we are mildly bored by so much ingenuousness, such a spate of innocence. As for the housewives whose effort filled the Walker Gallery and earned them not only prizes but the serious attention of the critics in the B.B.C. programme, I will risk being pilloried with the historic detractors of Keats in bidding them go back to their Bendix. Painting is in a bad enough way without their interference.

To end on a happier note: we are promised two exhibitions by women artists in October which should prove interesting: Orovida at the O'Hana, and Mary Potter at the Leicester.

CHINESE WORKS OF ART IN ENGLISH COLLECTIONS:

A Selection from the Seligman Collection

By E. E. BLUETT

THE formation of the Seligman collection occupied many years, years more fruitful in discovery of the products of the earliest known Chinese civilization, more abundant in the number of scholars eager to learn by means of these discoveries something of the customs and inner life of this ancient people and richer than ever before in the acquisition by Western collectors of Chinese works of art of the earliest periods.

To a student collector of the calibre of the late Professor Seligman who, with Mrs. Seligman, commenced to build this important collection, the second, third and fourth decades of the present century afforded unexampled opportunities in the flow of antique works of art from China, many of them first rate and of surpassing interest; days when, as Mr. Karlbek tells us in his recent book, peasants were eagerly digging up antiquities from tombs and sites of early habitation and when it was possible for those who knew their way about to "get those treasures past officials who were out to impound them."¹

With a view to maintaining the highest possible standard in the several sections both in respect of quality and artistic

merit a number of items and one whole section have been eliminated. The result is the collection we see to-day, a collection comprising pottery from Neolithic days onwards, bronzes and jades from the earliest days of China's history, porcelain of several types from the T'ang to the Sung period, including several superb examples of Chekiang celadon, Ting yao, Chün yao and pai ch'ing—extending into the Ming only in order to admit the splendid blue-and-white porcelain of the XIVth- and XVth-century potters.

The whole collection is to be catalogued, the bronzes, jades and sculptures by Professor Hansford, whose first volume will probably appear before this article is printed, and the pottery and porcelain by Mr. John Ayers. The latter volume is now in course of preparation and will be announced in due course.

With the kind permission of both these authors and the consent of the Arts Council a few of the illustrations from the forthcoming catalogues have been selected to accompany these notes. The extended captions have been added by the present writer.

¹ *Treasure Seeker in China*, Orvar Karlbek. Cresset Press. London, 1957.

1. Landscape with trees, mountain and dwelling-house, painted in black on a gold-speckled ground. By Tung Ch'i-chang (1555-1636). 6 in. by 3½ in.

This painting is one of four in an album, three painted in black and one delicately coloured, all on a gold-speckled ground.

Tung Ch'i-chang the painter was himself a collector and a critic whose expert opinion was held in high esteem during his own day and for some time after. His paintings and those of his contemporaries embodied the ideals of the Chinese literati (*Wên jên*) for whom painting was one of the pursuits that belonged to true culture.

The inscription on the painting reads "Leaning shades (under) the summer trees. Written by Hsuan-tsai."

2. Landscape with waterfall. Ink on paper, painted by Wang Shih-min (1592-1680). 12 in. by 9 in.

This artist, like the painter of the work last described, was clearly dominated by the conservative ideals of the *Wên jên* and, as Dr. Cohn points out, "the . . . theme of mountain valleys in their seasonal phases among whose threatening and rugged heights the human being and his habitation become all but invisible, keeps on reappearing in his pictures."

Four inscriptions mounted on the kakemono accompany this picture. Here is a brief quotation from one of them:

"Beautiful are the mountains and the rivers, luxuriant the

meadows and the woods. The width of the painting is only one foot but the perspective covers ten thousand li."





3. Bronze rectangular cooking vessel (Ting), one possibly used on ritual occasions, the sides with stylized representations of confronted birds in relief on a plain ground; between the birds the head of a horned animal. The body has a fine greyish-blue patina and the legs azurite incrustation of exceptionally brilliant tint. Shang Yin epoch. Height 8½ in.

Two features distinguish this remarkable bronze from any other first phase example in this large collection. It will be noticed that the pattern is moulded on a plain ground and that there is no sign of the *lei wen*—the squared spiral seen on nearly all Shang period vessels. Birds are occasionally seen though they are usually more highly stylized than those in the present example, but a hitherto unrecorded feature is the presence of dragon's scales on the necks of the birds.

4. (a) *T'ao t'ieh*, jade much calcified. Diameter 2½ in.
(b) Bird with outstretched wings. Diameter 2 in.
(c) Square-coiled dragon, grey-green, partly calcified. Length 2½ in.

The three items illustrated are selected as representative specimens from a large collection. The *T'ao t'ieh*, though a persistent decorative motif in bronze, is rarely seen in jade and this piece may well have served to ornament a bronze vessel using the central perforation for fastening. According to Karlgren this *T'ao t'ieh* is essentially a Shang-yin motif on bronzes and it is a reasonable assumption that this jade is entitled to a similar attribution.

The bird appears to be an owl in flight, a very uncommon form in jade. Owls are sometimes seen in bronze forms of the Chou dynasty and in pottery figures of Han and later date. This piece is probably a mortuary jade of Chou date and, like the fish with ever-open eyes, may be intended to suggest watchfulness.

The fine green jade dragon is not necessarily a mortuary piece, belonging, rather, to the kind of "Lung" said to have been used in prayers for rain.



5. Bronze kettle on four legs (*Ho*) the body with modified representation of the *T'ao t'ieh* on a ground of squared spirals, the lid similarly ornamented and the handle formed as an animal's head, possibly that of a mountain sheep. Round the neck there are confronted *kuei* dragons. Grey "water" patina. First stylistic phase. Height 9 in.

This vessel appears to have been designed for use on ceremonial occasions and was almost certainly intended for the heating of wine. It has been described as a vessel for blending the five tastes (acid, sour, salt, bitter, sweet) and in the *Sesei-kokan* there is a passage "At great feasts this (the *Ho*) serves to present the flavours; at ordinary meals, to please the palate."





6. Standing figures of a man and a woman, the man in a long belted coat, open frilled collar and close-fitting leggings, the woman with a high-waisted, low-cut robe with buckled belt. Slate-grey pottery with traces of dry pigment. Wei period (A.D. 368-557). Height 22 in. and 23½ in.

These outstanding examples of the pottery sculpture of the Vth century A.D. belong to the type usually classified as tomb figures. This they may be, and inasmuch as the attitude of the male figure is that of a guardian grasping a weapon they may well form part of the tomb furniture of a person of importance. But it is interesting to note that, according to Hentze, the form of the heads of these figures resembles that of Buddhist statues of the IVth to Vth century and that the kind of cap worn by both figures is also seen on the heads of persons in procession in the grotto of *Pin-Yang* at *Lung-mên*, an unusual association of Buddhism with the established funerary customs of the people.



7. Pottery model of a dancer; a non-Chinese type, possibly central Asian. *T'ang* period. Height 10 in.

At the festivals which marked the elaborate funeral rites prevalent during the *T'ang* dynasty the various performers appeared in festive apparel. The kind of figure illustrated is usually said to represent a wrestler but the personal adornment of this particular model and his general attitude suggest that of a dancer or possibly an actor.



9. Pottery model of a capped and bearded foreigner seated and holding in his right hand a small bird which he appears to be feeding. *T'ang* period. Height 7 in.

This figure, like that in the previous illustration, is probably intended to represent one of those whose function it was to provide entertainment during the funeral rites.



8. Rectangular Mirror. Bronze with a coating of lacquer inlaid with gold and silver figures of prancing lions, the border with birds and fish and the corners with floral sprays. *T'ang* period. 5 in. square.



10. Small bowl with four broad foliations. Porcelain with fine bluish-green celadon glaze. *Chekiang* ware and probably from *Lung-ch'üan*. *Sung* period. Diameter $3\frac{1}{4}$ in.

An attractive form of bowl rarely seen in celadon: in this respect it bears some resemblance to contemporary bowls of *Chün* ware fashioned in the kilns of *Chün-chou* in *Honan*.



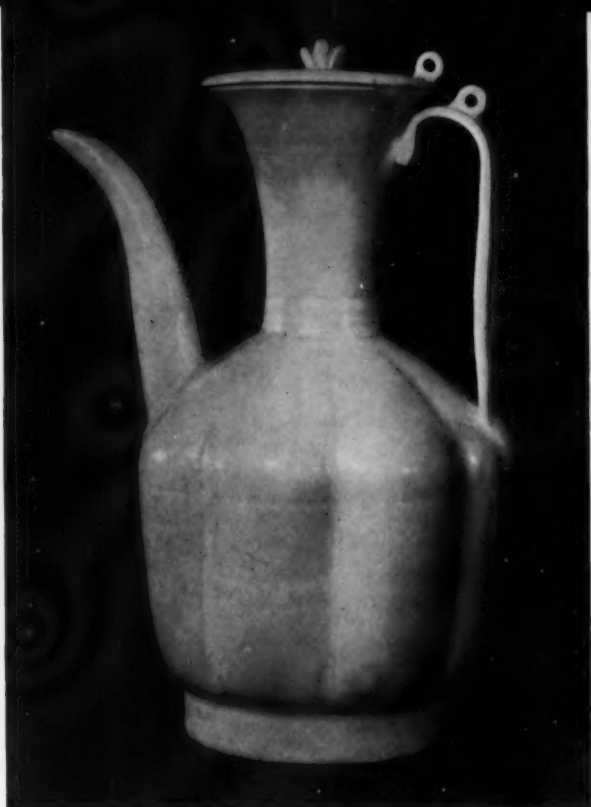
11. Box and cover, the lower portion modelled in the form of an expanded lotus flower, the cover surmounted by a finely modelled figure of a duck. Porcelain with olive-green celadon glaze. Northern ware of the Sung period. Height 6½ in.

Some years ago a large number of fragments of this ware were discovered several feet below the ground level when foundations for a missionary building were being excavated near a bend of the *Hwang-ho* in Eastern *Kansu*. The site, known locally as the *Wang Ba-ba* was said to be that of a Tartar camp of the XIIth century. This type of celadon is generally known as Northern ware to distinguish it from the better known *Chekiang* varieties usually styled *Lung-ch'uan yao*.



12. Flower pot with globular body and wide neck spreading at the mouth. Greenish opalescent glaze faintly crazed and displaying "earth-worm" marking characteristic of the Imperial wares of its class. Five holes for drainage in base. *Ch'ün* ware of the Sung period. Height 8 in.

This example of *Ch'ün* ware is in the front rank of its class for it belongs to the category known as Imperial *Ch'ün* and, lacking the brilliant richly tinted glazes of the better known bulb bowls and flower-pot stands, it is to the taste of the cultured Chinese.



13. Wine ewer and cover, the body six-lobed with slender neck expanding towards the lip and vertical handle springing from the body. Fine porcelain with delicate bluish-white (*Ch'ing pai*) glaze. Sung period. Height 6½ in.

The pale bluish-white glaze, known variously as *Ying Ch'ing* or *Ch'ing pai*, is seen at its best when applied to the fine porcelain of which the ewer in our illustration is an example. Ample evidence exists to show that the type was produced during the Sung period and the form of this vessel leaves no room for doubt that it belongs to this early date.



14. Six-sided dish of fine porcelain formed as the expanded corolla of a flower, the petals indicated in a finely tooled pattern under a bluish-tinted glaze of *Ch'ing pai* type. Sung period. Diameter 7 in.

Brankston found several fragments of this ware on some kiln sites of the Imperial factories at *Ching-te-chen*. Yet, in spite of its outstanding ceramic qualities and its obvious claim to be classified among the finer products of the early kilns, this porcelain has not yet been satisfactorily identified among the classic wares referred to in ancient records.

APOLLO



ALVA

Dynamic Composition, 1945.

Canvas. 50 × 61 cm.

Private Collection, London.

[The following acknowledgments are due for the illustrations in colour in the following pages : for Vieira da Silva, Poliakoff, Sugaï, and Fautrier to Editions Georges Fall, Paris ; for Torres Garcia to Editions Hazan, Paris.]

AN INTRODUCTION TO ABSTRACT PAINTING

By JOHN PROSSOR

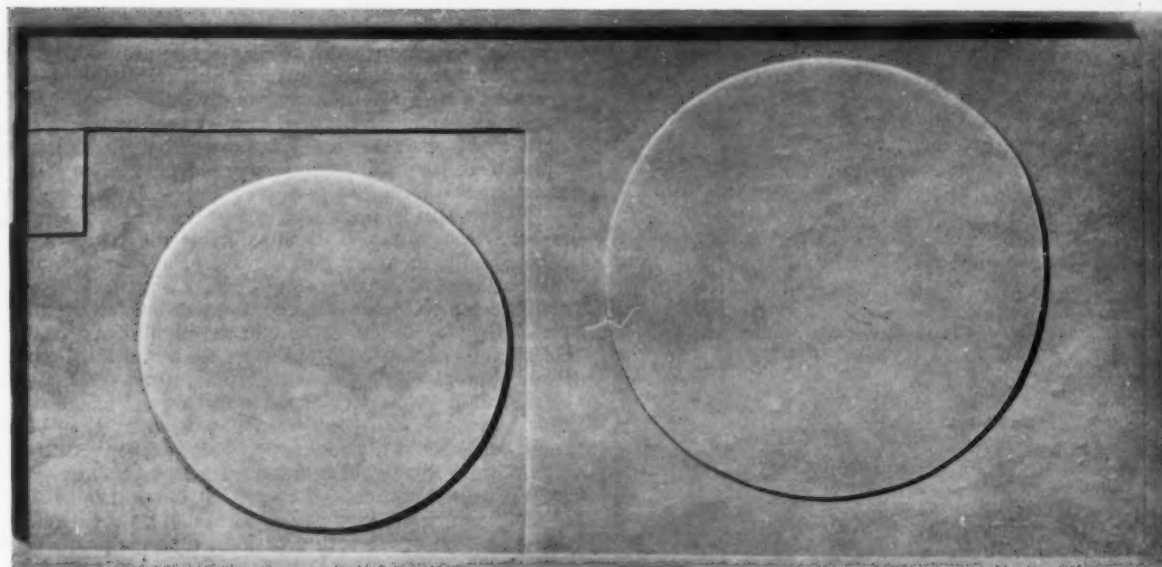


Fig. I. BEN NICHOLSON. Carved White Relief, 1934.
Gimpel Fils Gallery.

IT may be considered unnecessary to preface a short survey of a particular aspect of art with more general considerations. However, I believe that it is impossible properly to set forth the principles underlying my thesis without first mentioning the broad theories on which it is founded.

WHAT IS ABSTRACT PAINTING?

All painting falls into two main categories, distinct not merely superficially but in their essential nature from each other. These are (1), that which seeks as its goal some form of naturalistic representation, what we are accustomed to refer to as Classic Art and post-Renaissance Humanistic Art, and, (2), that which repudiates the natural form as its ideal and substitutes a special stylized form of its own invention—Primitive, Inca, Aztec, Egyptian, Indian, Byzantine, etc., and the forms collectively known as Gothic. These approximate, in art-historical terms, to the concepts *Vital* and *Geometric* art, or in other words, *Naturalistic* and *Abstract* arts. The objective part of the present article is only concerned, however, with abstract painting of the twentieth century, and reference will be made to earlier forms only in order to illuminate questions concerning contemporary abstract painting. This may be defined, within broad limits, as that which, in the finished product, presents no visible connection with ordinary reality—apart from purely fortuitous similarities—regardless of whether or not the artist started from such reality. That is to say, where the goal of the artist is primarily mental and imaginative rather than physical and visual.

Many people are inclined to regard all abstract and allied styles of painting as belonging to the same movement. Such an idea is only likely to result in the creation of even worse confusion than that which must obviously exist in their minds at present. The modern abstract movement, if such a name can be given to something displaying so many different hues and aspects, is composed of a great many divergent and often contradictory elements. Of these many will certainly die, others amalgamate and only a very small minority go on to the creation of anything of lasting value.

WHY ABSTRACT PAINTING?

This query raises problems of great complexity quite outside the scope of this article and is inevitably bound up with the whole question of that emotional necessity which compels some men to use painting as a medium of expression. A great deal of what can only be described as nonsense has been written on the question of "Why Abstract Painting?" The answer lies far deeper than most critics appear ready to admit. A stock reply by would-be detractors is that painters embrace this form because of their inability to draw. Some consideration will convince the reader that this cannot be true. All art is created to satisfy a particular need, a point which will be discussed at greater length elsewhere in this article. At the present time there are in Paris alone between forty and fifty thousand painters; all other European countries have their own practitioners, and in addition there is a very large school in America. Certainly in Paris the greater number of these painters are engaged in abstract or semi-abstract work. Most of them learnt, as students, to draw in the classical manner and, indeed, started their careers as figurative artists; but in any case it cannot possibly be maintained that they have all been denied the faculty of draughtsmanship. The answer to the question of "Why Abstraction?" must then lie in the basic need felt by the painter to fulfil his purpose and the manner in which he feels impelled to do so. It is necessary briefly to outline the theory of this reaction.

A THEORY OF ABSTRACTION

All theories of aesthetics in relation to modern art are largely founded on the work of Professor Wilhelm Worringer whose first, and perhaps most influential, contribution—founded in part upon the work of Lipps, Riegl and Semper—was first published in 1908¹ and on which the following notes are based. Referring to the materialistic method of art-historical evaluation which had previously held sway, Worringer says, "For it [the history of art] was, in the last analysis, a history of *ability*. The new approach, on the contrary, regards the history of the evolution of art as a

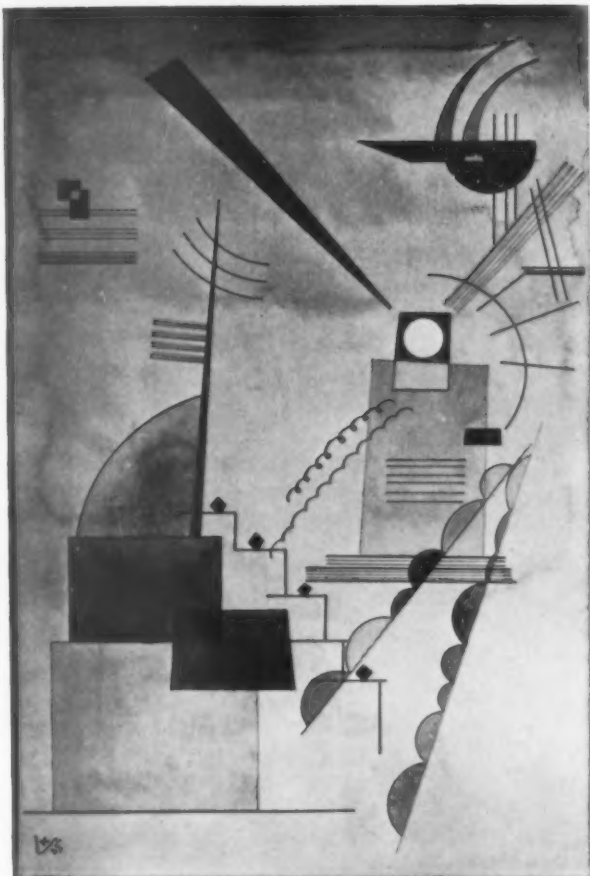


Fig. II. WASSILY KANDINSKY. *Violett*, 1925, Watercolour.
Hanover Gallery.

history of *volition*, proceeding from the psychological pre-assumption that ability is only a secondary consequence of volition. The stylistic peculiarities of past epochs are, therefore, not to be explained by lack of ability, but by a differently directed volition. The crucial factor is thus what Riegl terms 'the absolute artistic volition,' which is merely modified by the three other factors of utilitarian purpose, raw material, and technics. 'These three factors are no longer given that positive creative role assigned them by the materialist theory, instead they are assumed to play an inhibiting, negative one: they represent, as it were, the co-efficients of friction within the total product' (Riegl, *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie*).

"Most people will fail to understand why such an exclusive significance is given to the concept artistic volition, because they start from the firmly embedded naïve preconception that artistic volition (i.e., the aim-conscious impulse that precedes the genesis of the work of art), *has been the same in all ages*,² apart from certain variations which are known as stylistic peculiarities, and as far as the plastic arts are concerned has approximation to the natural model as its goal. All our judgments on the artistic products of the past suffer from this one-sidedness." Or to put it another way, no valid, sincere artistic style is created to fulfil a preconceived, set pattern—to conform with tradition or the dictates of the academy—but is created to satisfy an urgent need felt by its authors to express themselves in a particular way. The painter acts as the vehicle of outside conditions, the existence of which he may be unaware, but to which he is compelled to respond if he possesses the type of hypersensitive nature which is an elementary prerequisite of the true artist.

Painting is by no means the only current manifestation of a tendency to abstraction. In literature, music, philosophy, the theatre and cinema is to be noted the same direction. It follows, therefore, that the painter is merely expressing in his own idiom a widespread metaphysical condition which is felt with equal force by other men working in other fields. What then is this condition of Man? It has been described by Heidegger as "being exposed to nothingness," and by other philosophers in similar terms. The world exists in a state of chaos, apparently out of control. The materialistic philosophy of the previous century has been replaced by an acute sense of our spiritual inadequacy but which there seems, to the majority of men, to be no means of satisfying.

Nature, that is, the world at large, no longer presents an aspect which, in art, is ideally suitable for representation. More simply, there is a gulf between man's aspirations and the world as it appears to him—even Communism, to take one example, for nearly a hundred years a distant yet tangible possibility, has turned to dust in the mouths of those who fed upon its hopes. Man, therefore, no longer feels impelled to paint pictures of this discredited reality. This feeling of alienation in the face of the world results in the arts in what Worringer calls the "tendency to abstraction." The result as we see it in contemporary art is the repudiation of naturalism and the substitution of inorganic forms of the artist's own invention. The natural development of this is that when man's aesthetic aspirations find satisfaction in the projection of his spiritual needs, (i.e., the painting), we shall call it beautiful. But when there is a considerable divergence between our spiritual needs and the object, we are unable to appreciate it owing to the difference between our needs and those which gave birth to the object.

The painter tends to substitute for the disharmony and unintelligibility of the visible world a harmony and unity of his own creation. The volitional force of this necessity is the root cause of twentieth-century abstract art.

THE POSITION OF THE PAINTER IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

For centuries the position of the painter in society remained unchanged. He started life first and foremost as a craftsman, a member of the Guild of Saint Luke who was apprenticed at an early age and, if it proved that he had the necessary ability, he could eventually become a painter in his own right instead of merely serving a master all his life. It is said that this system of apprenticeship approximated to the modern art school but, in fact, it did not. The difference went far deeper than a mere system of tuition and was primarily a matter of social position—the painter being on a par with the goldsmith or any other skilled craftsman—and the type of intellect which it was considered



Fig. III. PAUL MANSUROV. Section of an Exhibition, Moscow, 1918.

AN INTRODUCTION TO ABSTRACT PAINTING

necessary for a painter to possess. In regard to the latter it was entirely a matter of chance whether the boy happened to have the right type of intellectual equipment, but it was never considered an essential part of his armament without which he was unlikely to achieve more than a limited facility.

To-day the situation is utterly different. As M. Michel Seuphor³ has pointed out, the painter should ideally have now become a painter-philosopher, the quality and intelligibility of his vision being in direct proportion to the range of his intellect. The essential difference between the abstract arts of the past and that of our own time is that in the former the style was generated by a similar volition but activated more by instinct, whereas in the latter the abstract manifestation is largely the result of the most acute degree of intellectual awareness.

ENGLISH CRITICISM IN RELATION TO ABSTRACT PAINTING

The situation in this field demands comment. "It is indeed a sign of the abject *philosophical* poverty of English art criticism that it has never come to terms with abstract or non-figurative art." The measure of the truth of these words of Sir Herbert Read, perhaps the only considerable English art-philosopher since the death of T. E. Hulme, may be assessed by the quantity of ridiculous, inaccurate and vicious words constantly appearing in what are generally regarded as responsible journals. The cause of the trouble—from the position of both critic and public—is the outdated and archaic critical principles which are still held to apply. In fact, the standards of the Renaissance, well though they may have served their purpose in the past, can only lead, when applied to an art as different in concept as our own, to misunderstanding and false judgments. Many people, even those who find that the new art satisfies their personal needs, falsify their own sincere appreciation by



Fig. IV. N. GONTCHAROVA. Painting, 1910.
Tate Gallery.



Fig. V. ROBERT DELAUNAY. Rhythm, 1938.
Private Collection, Paris.

the use of an invalid terminology. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that many English people marginally interested in painting have, due to the negative and condemnatory attitudes adopted by the would-be interpreters on whom they rely, made no attempt to see and evaluate for themselves this new art.

Further, the traditional English reluctance to commitment in art, as in everything else, decries partisanship in criticism with the result that many English critics elect to follow no particular style or creed and are consequently ineffectual. On the Continent the contrary applies and it would be hard indeed to find a critic who would admit to ever having made an attempt at dispassionate judgments.

APPRECIATION AND VALUES

It is no more difficult to appreciate abstract art than any other and requires no violent mental gymnastics, but simply a contribution on the part of the onlooker. The purpose of this article is, in the end, to induce the reader to approach abstract painting without prejudice. Here it should be stressed that no attempt is being made to maintain that contemporary abstraction is either better or worse than the average output of any other period. Until it is possible to make a more objective assessment it must be assumed that the artistic potential of all ages is approximately the same.

Art is inevitably associated in the mind with a degree of sanctity. This reverence is not the outcome of that weird witch-doctor attitude adopted by the uneducated when faced by something they cannot understand, it is a real and valid emotion common to all of us in the presence of anything great. It is the recognition of what, for lack of a better word, we call genius—the quality represented in past ages by the halo; the artist's ability to make clear something of which we were not previously aware: to inscribe a line the truth of which produces in us a consciousness of that same truth. It follows that there must ultimately exist an *absolute* truth; but again it follows that such truth is an unattainable reality, of which some of us are made partially aware by what we call "art." This leads to a consideration of the inseparable association between religion and art—a connection which is nowadays too rarely acknowledged. It should be understood that by religion we refer to that awareness of spiritual values which may take the form of Christianity, Atheism

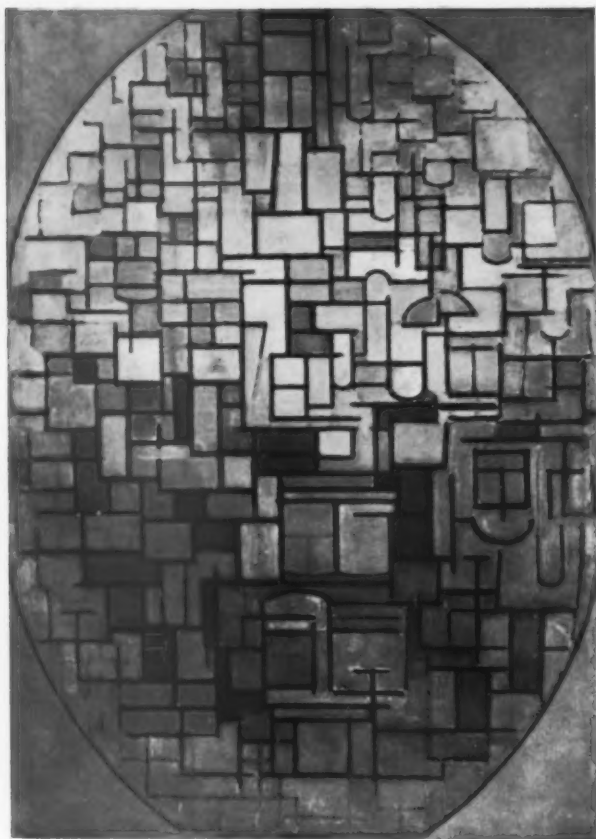


Fig. VI. PIET MONDRIAN. Composition Ovale, 1917.
Municipal Museum, Amsterdam.

or any other persuasion. Contrary to what may appear to be the case, but which will, on reflection, be seen to be correct, most contemporary styles—both abstract and figurative—are manifestations of a resurgence of interest in true spiritual values. Mr. Stuart Holroyd⁵ has summarized the situation as follows:

A. The authentic religious attitude: separates the divine and the human, subordinates man to absolute values, produces an art which is austere, hard, precise, sometimes static and sometimes tending towards abstraction.

B. The Humanist or pseudo-religious attitude: takes Man as the measure of all things, has values which are conveniently capable of adjusting themselves to human needs, produces an art which may be highly idealistic and dynamic or vague and sentimental, depending on the character of the artist.

There will obviously be exceptions to these classes, as there will be to the concepts of vital and geometrical arts, but in the main this classification holds good. The style generally referred to as Social Realist painting also falls, in this respect, within the same category as abstract art. Bearing in mind the compulsion, already mentioned, which manifests itself in a particular style; and its dictation by the absolute artistic volition, the artist patently does not produce something which is unintelligible to those of his fellow men gifted with a similar degree of sensitivity to the atmosphere and ambience of their times. To them the artist must represent the purest and most intelligible degree of the expression of that mood and ambience. Therefore, I repeat, to attain full appreciation it is necessary to project the intellectual apprehensive faculties into the creative orbit of the artist. To those remaining outside this area all will be incomprehensible and any judgments pronounced, absurd.

THE BASIC CONCEPTS OF ABSTRACT ART

Before proceeding to a closer examination of twentieth-century abstract painting it is necessary to define certain underlying concepts. Of these the most important are:

(i) Artistic or painterly beauty has no connection with natural beauty. Critical considerations have for centuries been dogged by the almost universal confusion existing between these two quite separate entities ever since the association between art and the written word began. In relation to naturalistic art, "The activity of plastic art takes possession of the object as something to be illuminated by the mode of representation, not as something that is already poetic or significant in itself."⁶

(ii) Both naturalistic and abstract arts are simply expressions, although the extremes, of the objectivization of a vital and basic human need. They should be regarded, therefore, as a single manifestation of this need and not as two completely different elements.

(iii) It must be remembered in the contemplation of any work of art that distaste and pleasure are simply degrees of the same emotion and not two different emotions.

(iv) All art forms should be considered in the context of their own time, to the conditions of which they owe their genesis. The ideal historian is one who is capable of re-creating in his own mind the philosophical, social and metaphysical conditions which prevailed at the time of which he writes.

(v) Naturalistic art must be clearly distinguished from the merely imitative, "... it is necessary to be agreed that the impulse to imitation, this elemental need of man, stands outside aesthetics proper and that, in principle, its gratification has nothing to do with art. . . . We must distinguish between the imitation impulse and naturalism as a type of art. They are by no means identical in their physical quality and must be sharply segregated from one another, however difficult this may appear."⁷ That is, the imitative is a non-valid form which is no concern of ours here.

(vi) It is necessary to delimit the participation of mental and cerebral functions in art appreciation, particularly in the contemplation of abstract painting. Our responses, part intellectual and part sensual, must inevitably be confused

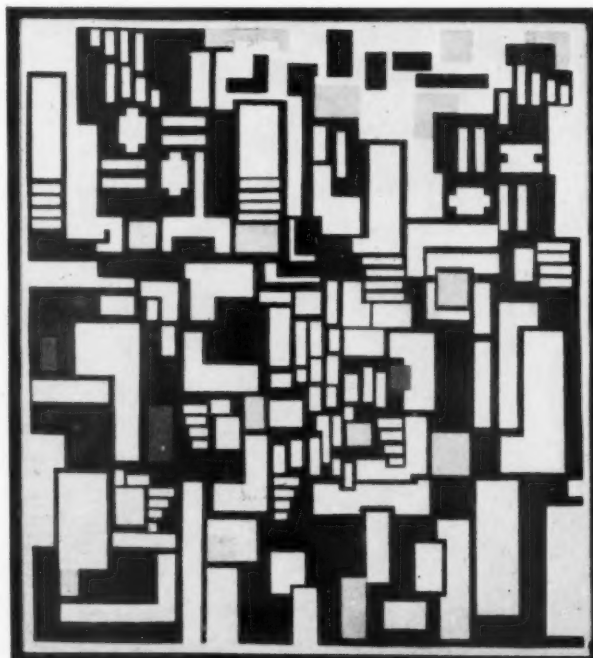


Fig. VII. THEO VAN DOESBURG. Composition IX, 1917.
Municipal Museum, The Hague.

AN INTRODUCTION TO ABSTRACT PAINTING

owing to the preconceived evaluation we have often made of the desirability, worth or fashionableness of the object under consideration. We are more apt to comment on an influence or a technical point rather than, for example, on colour, spatial relationships or pictorial values.

(vii) Art is essentially subjective and metaphysical, and demands appreciation as the emotional and sensual reaction which it most obviously is.

THE BIRTH OF A NEW REALITY

It is difficult to discover where the roots of modern abstract painting truly lie. The innovations of the great masters of the first half of the XIXth century contributed to the destruction of established concepts of painterly merit, whilst the breakdown of the system of patronage and the loss of power by the *Salon* permitted the artist a new freedom to determine his actions for himself.

Gauguin gave to the Fauves a vision of the pure function of colour which transcended the academic realism it had served for so long. His "discovery" and popularization of primitive and Negro art, together with Cézanne's reduction of structure to the "cylinder, sphere and cone," laid the foundations of Cubism. But whilst these discoveries contributed to the emergence of abstraction proper, they were not the reason for its appearance, and it should be borne in mind that Impressionism, Pointillism, Symbolism, Fauvism and Cubism are all essentially figurative styles. Read⁸ has likened the formation of the modern movement in art to the complex "movement" of a chronometer, and, indeed, that seems a likely analogy, for in the phenomenon we are considering there is a similar dependence on the interaction of many component parts, rather than one overriding force motivating all the visible aspects. The emergence of abstraction as a definite style lies in *absolute artistic volition* leading, under a particular set of circumstances, to an *urge towards the abstract*. This urge is always most apparent among those peoples traditionally most susceptible to psychic and metaphysical influences, i.e., the Slav, Netherlandish and Germanic races. The truth of this is illustrated by the fact that a Dutchman, Piet Mondrian (1872-1944), and a Russian, Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), must be acknowledged as the real instigators of abstract painting. Kandinsky is generally recognized as the first pure non-objective painter, having produced in Munich in 1910 his first deliberately abstract water-colour. This is composed of colour in dynamic juxtaposition, wildly distorted line, absence of planes or any attempt at spatial disposition, with a strong rhythmic content—the whole being completely devoid of any representational relevance. This marks the beginning of his two "dramatic" periods which extended up to about



Fig. IX. PAUL KLEE. *Intention*, 1938.
Klee Foundation, Berne.

1920. Subsequently he strove after a more ordered construction, marked by the appearance of geometric and other highly stylized signs (Fig. II).

Kandinsky spent various periods in Munich—from 1896 to 1902, and again from 1907 to the outbreak of war, when he retired to Switzerland⁹ so he was there when Worringer's great book was published in 1908 by Piper Verlag. It is impossible to believe that it failed to come to the notice of the painter. The query then raises itself as to the extent to which *Abstraktion und Einfühlung* precipitated the advent of the style which had obviously, as can be seen by reference to earlier work, been germinating in Kandinsky's mind for some years. Further, as Read¹⁰ points out, when in 1912 the painter published his own book, *Über das Geistige in der Kunst*,¹¹ it was issued by the same house, Piper Verlag. This work, which by its title demonstrates the importance the painter attached to spiritual matters, appears to be fundamentally influenced by Worringer. In it Kandinsky reiterates the point already made by the historian and emphasized throughout this paper, "The most important thing about form is to know whether it emerges from an inner necessity."

The period immediately preceding the first world war was distinguished by an extraordinary eruption of painterly activity. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that Kandinsky's innovation immediately found enthusiastic and able followers. One of these was Franz Marc (1880-1916), on whom Kandinsky exercised a deep influence and who was one of the founders of the *Blaue Reiter* (Blue Rider, after the title of one of Kandinsky's paintings), Group. The later and more important influence of Robert Delaunay on the young German resulted, between 1912 and 1914, in his producing a number of canvases which will ensure his immortality.

It was in Russia that the new reality found its most numerous and extreme practitioners. In a few short years there grew up a number of movements, the most important of which was Suprematism, founded by Casimir Malevitch (1878-1935). His influence was as much revolutionary as painterly, for he grasped the substance of abstraction as a sudden disclosure rather than as the result of a dialectical evolution. In 1913, he exhibited his famous "Black Square on a White Ground," which may be taken as the starting-point of Suprematism. All his subsequent output—so far as is known—was founded upon this and composed of geometric forms, mostly squares, circles and crosses. From the mid-twenties, when abstract art fell into disrepute with the Soviet authorities, little is known of Malevitch's work. One of the best of his collaborators was Paul Mansourouff¹² (born 1896), whose horizon, however, was not strictly limited to Suprematism, as is apparent from the work he showed in 1918 (Fig. III). His paintings are usually

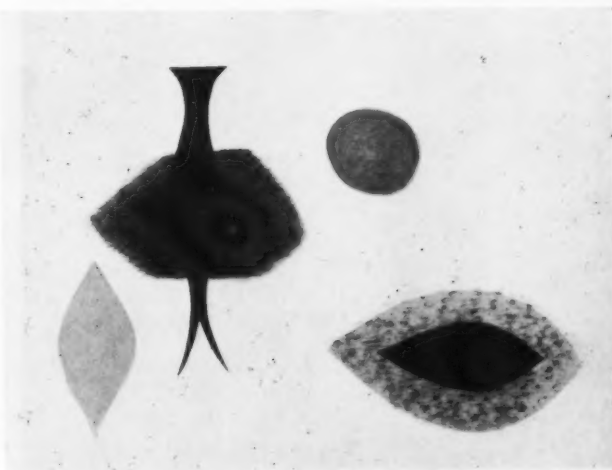


Fig. VIII. PAULE VEZELAY. *Drawing*, 1957.
Collection Jean Arp.

APOLLO



VIEIRA DA SILVA (above). *Les Pierres*, 1951.
60 × 91 cm.
Galerie Pierre, Paris



BISSIERE. *La fête à Neuilly*. 1956. 97 × 130 cm.
Galerie Jeanne Bûcher, Paris

AN INTRODUCTION TO ABSTRACT PAINTING

founded upon stylized forms, or, more simply, lines of varying tensile strength. Mansourov's real achievement is in the purity and austerity of his paintings. He makes no concessions to false sentiment or values other than those at which he originally aimed.

A manifesto was issued in 1913 on behalf of another movement, Rayonism, by Michael Larionov (born 1881,) who worked in close collaboration with his friend, Nathalie Gontcharova (born 1881), (Fig. IV). The aim of the movement was to create something which, by means of the technique of dots and crossed or parallel beams of colour, would convey an impression transcending ordinary reality and lead to an awareness of the space-time dimension. In 1915, Larionov assisted Malevitch in the production of a Suprematist manifesto. Also in 1913 Vladimir Tatlin (born 1885), started Constructivism after a period in which he worked with Larionov. This was a three-dimensional development of painting and therefore falls within the field of sculpture. Sufficient to say that two of the greatest contemporary artists, the brothers Naum Gabo and Antoine Pevsner (both Russia, 1890), work partly in this manner, whilst in England at the present time Victor Pasmore (born 1908), is the best known exponent, although to a large extent his work stems from Vantongerloo. Alexander Rodchenko (born 1891), founded yet another movement about 1915, Non-Objectivism, which became closely allied with Suprematism and eventually integrated in Constructivism.

El Lissitzky (1890-1941) came under the influence of Malevitch and the Constructivists about 1914. In 1919, he created a very personal style which he christened *Proun*. This was dependent on the integration of two and three dimensional forms in painting to throw into relief a new conception of space. He met Moholy-Nagy—who became professor at the Bauhaus in 1923—in 1921, and thus Lissitzky's influence was spread all over Europe and may, indeed, be said to have had a radical effect on the course of abstract painting.

Meanwhile, there had been great activity outside Russia. In Paris in 1911-12 Frank Kupka (1871-1957) a Czech, had painted completely non-figurative works, "Fugue à deux couleurs" and "Chromatique chaude," which he exhibited at the Salon d'Automne of that year. This was the logical outcome of the experiments he had been making over a number of years into the relationship between various complimentary and non-complimentary colours. He was always to emphasize the rhythmic element in all his work. Robert Delaunay (1885-1941), a native of Paris, painted his "Windows" in 1912. This is a key work in the history of abstract art. The poet Guillaume Apollinaire was deeply



Fig. X. L. ALCOPLEY. Painting, 1953-54.
Private Collection, Paris.

E**



Fig. XI. SERGE CHARCHOUNE. Composition inspired by Beethoven's 7th Symphony, 1955-6.
Collection William Copley, Paris.

impressed by it and in a lecture given in Berlin at the time of Delaunay's exhibition at the Der Sturm Gallery in 1912 first employed the word *Orphism* to describe the movement which was forming about the painter at that time, emphasizing the lyrical character and the supreme importance of colour in the new pictorial composition. Later Delaunay collaborated further with Kupka in the development of Orphism when the accent on circular rhythms became more and more marked (Fig. V). Closely allied to Orphism, although its authors strenuously denied it, was the movement Synchronism, founded in the same year by the Americans Stanton MacDonald Wright (b. 1890) and Morgan Russell (1886-1953). Two exhibitions were held, in Munich and Paris, and caused considerable controversy. MacDonald Wright returned to the United States in 1916 and abandoned abstract painting in c. 1919. In 1954 he again took up abstraction which he now practises, displaying a brilliant lyrical style bearing some similarities to Synchronism. Morgan Russell returned to figurative painting at about the same time as MacDonald Wright. These two painters made the only important American contribution in the early years of abstract painting.

Another figure prominent in the early years was Francis Picabia (1879-1953), who, throughout his life, performed the role of inventor rather than explorer. He was called "the Christopher Columbus of art" by Jean Arp. In 1912 he adopted an Orphic style and pursued it until 1915 when he met Marcel Duchamp, an artist of similarly anarchistic inclination, and together laid the foundations of the Dada movement. From about 1925 Picabia practised figurative painting but in 1945 returned to abstraction.

Before the First World War the only English painter who attempted abstraction was Wyndham Lewis (1884-1957). His Vorticism was, however, an off-shoot of Cubism and although it became abstract for a time, Lewis later repudiated his belief in this style.

A most important figure in the formulative period of abstract art is the Alsatian painter, sculptor and poet, Jean Arp (b. 1887). He had met Paul Klee in 1909 and in 1912 visited Kandinsky in Munich where he was invited to take part in the *Blaue Reiter* exhibition. These contacts, together with what he had seen of modern art in Paris on earlier visits, exercised a deep influence on him, and in 1915 he executed his first abstract works. These were composed of, generally, rectilinear forms. It was not long, however, before he abandoned these for less rigid shapes. He collaborated in the Dada movement and, c. 1916, met the artist Sophie Taeuber whom he married in 1921. He was much influenced by her very austere art. His work has undergone several radical changes but the aim has always remained essentially the same, that is, the search for greater purity of form.

Early in 1912, Piet Mondrian emerged from the comparative quiet of Holland and went to stay in Paris, where he remained until just before the outbreak of war. The impact of the diversity and intensity of Parisian painterly



Fig. XII. HANS HARTUNG. *Composition*, 1954.
Gimpel Fils Gallery.

activity had the deepest effect on him. He started almost at once on the famous series of "Trees," by which the whole course of his art was shaped.¹³ These progress in orderly and logical fashion from the purely representational to the purely abstract. During the war he continued his researches in Holland and eventually, working always by logical progression and in series, reduced familiar objects to horizontal and vertical rhythms. These were the forerunners of the movement, Neo-Plasticism, with its ideal of a pure plastic art. Mondrian made the acquaintance of Theo Van Doesburg (1883-1931), in 1915, and of Bart Van der Leek (b. 1876) in 1916. Together they founded the review *De Stijl* (The Style), to advance their views, and it was published in Leiden and Paris from 1917 to 1928 with Van Doesburg as editor. With Dutch tenacity and patience they pursued the doctrine of Neo-Plasticism over the course of many years. In 1919, Mondrian returned to Paris where he



Fig. XIII. AUGUSTE HERBIN. *Parfum I*, 1954.
Galerie Denise René, Paris.



Fig. XIV. JOHN KOENIG. *Départ de Weiswampack*, 1955.
Galerie Arnaud, Paris.

remained until 1938, leaving at the threat of war. He spent two years in London and left for New York in 1940, where he died in 1944. During this last period in America Mondrian executed some of his greatest paintings. Throughout his life he lived quietly, pursuing his chosen path with the dedication of an apostle. He sold rarely, exhibited little and was unknown to the general public. To-day there is hardly a single aspect of architecture, decoration or domestic life which does not bear the influence of Neo-Plasticism (Figs. VI and VII).

One of the few leading Cubists ever to achieve the completely abstract was the scribe of the Cubist movement, Albert Gleizes (1881-1953). He was constantly involved in intellectual research and wrote numerous books and articles on his theories. His abstract paintings are primarily concerned with the interaction of planes of varying hue and colour.

In the period between the two wars abstract painting declined and lost many of its former adherents. The more important practitioners, however, remained faithful and continued to pursue their investigations. In England Ben Nicholson (b. 1894) was almost the only painter of international standing. Readers will be sufficiently well acquainted with his work to preclude the necessity for further discussion here. Recently his painting was chosen by an international jury from a representative selection of works from all over the world to win the first Guggenheim Award. Previous to this, in 1952, he was awarded first prize at the Pittsburgh International.¹⁴ His "White Reliefs" (Fig. I) of the mid-30's must be reckoned among the finest achievements of abstract art. Another English painter of high standing who practised abstraction from 1928 onwards is Paule Vezelay (Fig. VIII). She lived, however, in Paris from 1923 to 1939. Her work has always remained distinctive, highly personal, and of great delicacy and purity. *Axis*, founded in 1935 by Myfanwy Evans, was the first British magazine to speak on behalf of abstract art and contained articles by a number of distinguished authors.

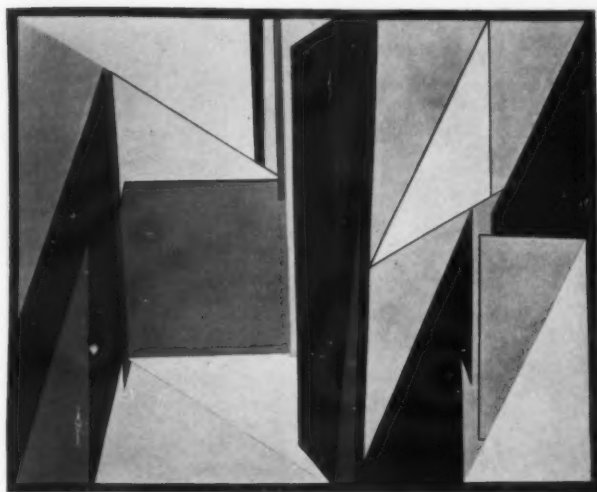


Fig. XV. RICHARD MORTENSEN. Nord, 1956.
Galerie Denise René, Paris.

A prominent feature of the inter-war years was the Bauhaus, founded at Weimar in 1919 by Walter Gropius, a leading German architect. Its aims were, to some extent, analogous with those of Neo Plasticism; i.e., to achieve the integration of the arts—architecture, sculpture, painting, with craftsmanship, and thus produce a practical application. The institution moved to Dessau in 1929 before being finally closed by the Nazis in 1933. It numbered some of the most alert and inventive brains of the era among its teaching staff, including Feininger, Klee, Schlemmer, Kandinsky and Moholy-Nagy. It exerted an influence of profound and lasting importance which is still apparent everywhere.

Paul Klee (1879–1940), a Swiss, professor at the Bauhaus 1920–1929, was one of the least academic and most original painters in the whole history of art (Fig. IX). At the same time his work is the most difficult of all to summarize in a short space. His admissibility to the genus of abstract painters is founded on only the smaller portion of his total output. Most of his work contains some reference to naturalistic forms but occasionally he is occupied solely with form and colour. Klee's art must be seen in quantity and examined slowly and carefully in order that the full force of his very considerable intellect may be appreciated. He was foremost an individual and owed nothing to any of the movements by which, for the greater part of his life, he was surrounded. Probably no other XXth-century painter with the exception of Mondrian has exercised a greater influence.

In Paris in 1930 the International exhibition, *Cercle et Carré*, organized by Michel Seuphor and Joaquín Torres-García (1874–1949), marked a decisive step in the evolution of abstract art. Most of the leading non-figurative painters then alive exhibited and the effect was considerable. The Uruguayan, Torres-García (Col. Pl.), lived in Paris, after an earlier visit, from 1924 until 1932. During this time he was strongly influenced by Mondrian, on whom he wrote a great deal, and to a lesser extent by Klee and Cubism. These elements he integrated with the art of his own country, essentially of a pre-Columbian nature, forming a highly personal idiom. The Uruguayan pavilion at the Venice Biennale of 1956 was devoted almost entirely to him and formed an outstanding feature, his work being virtually unknown, or forgotten, by most critics. It remains to be "discovered" by the majority in this country.

THE POST WAR PERIOD AND SOME CURRENT TENDENCIES

Due mainly to the intolerance of certain states to non-conformist artistic activity, Paris, between the wars, became the international centre of art. To a lesser degree, but for the

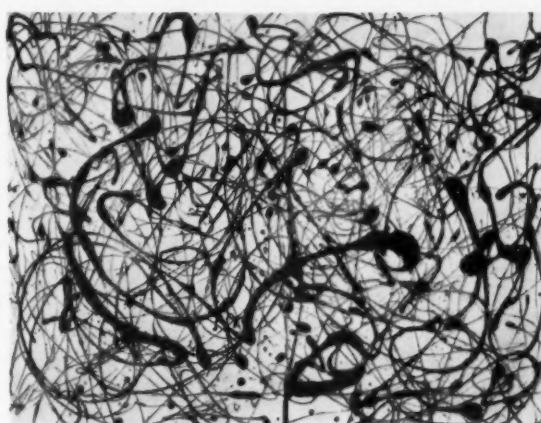


Fig. XVI. JACKSON POLLOCK. Number 14, 1948.
Museum of Modern Art, New York.

same political reasons, England and the United States received a strong and much-needed transfusion of Continental thought in the late 1930's. This stimulus, the growing strength of its own artists and thinkers and reaction against isolationism, enabled America after the war to compete for the first time on even terms in the artistic world. After the war a large part of the vast credits built up by America throughout Europe were dispersed with great liberality to ex-servicemen and others, not all Americans, for cultural purposes. These factors, together with the advent of cheaper and better colour reproduction, increased travel and the exchange of ideas, stimulated by travelling exhibitions, resulted in the emergence of *international* rather than *national* painterly characteristics. Thus it may be said that, apart from the Oriental, the only clearly distinguished school is *l'Ecole de Paris*—which, in any event, is manifest in a philosophical rather than a concrete manner. The last decade has witnessed the rise of the School of Paris to a position of power from which it dominates all others.

In recent times not only has the attitude of painters toward their own work changed, but also that of the public. There has been an increased emphasis on the existence of the painting as an entity in its own right rather than an illustration of another object. There is an accent on space—the positive space in which we exist together with the painting—rather than pictorial space as an element existing separately within the framework of the composition. There is now a new interest which involves the viewer more deeply in the psychic processes which precede the creative act. A further, and most important, feature of the post-war scene is that the general public are now taking a greater and more



Fig. XVII. NICOLAS DE STAEL. Composition, c. 1950.
Hanover Gallery.



TORRES-GARCÍA. Art Constructif. 1931. 72 × 52 cm.



FAUTRIER. Composition. 1956. 27 × 22 cm. Collection Eli de Rothschild.



SUGAI. Yamato, 1956. 100 × 73 cm. Private Collection.



POLIAKOFF. Composition. 1954. 41 × 33 cm. Private Collection, Paris.



Fig. XVIII. ANTONIO TAPIES. Painting, 1955.
Arthur Tooth & Sons.

intimate interest in the art of all periods and contemporary painting in particular.

In 1945, the painterly world was in the same state of confusion as everything else. Paris, however, was quickest to recover its equilibrium. The exhibition *Art Concret* at the Galerie Drouin in 1945 and the first *Salon des Réalités Nouvelles* in 1946 helped to resolve the situation and painters divided into two main groups: Figurative, following the leadership of Francis Gruber (1912-1948); and Abstract in varying degrees. Since that time the situation has changed radically although not violently. As abstract art has achieved wider recognition so it has lost its belligerent attitude and become more objective and less angular. At the same time, as confidence in the world ebbed, to be replaced by despair and disillusionment, so the inspiration of the Realists receded. In consequence there is, at present, an ever-growing element of abstraction apparent in their work—so much so that, in the case of one of the leaders, Rebeyrolle, his work has become almost totally abstract—as the Tate's recent purchase, his "Trout," 1957, bears witness.

Any attempt to select individual painters from the vast array of contemporary talent must necessarily be arbitrary.

A shortcoming of much current criticism is the attempt to fit every painter into a ready-made box and nail him down with home-grown edicts. Evidence of this is the current mass-application in England of the label *Tachiste*, a term first used, to the best of my knowledge, by Kandinsky as the title of one of his compositions in 1910. It is now bandied about indiscriminately, whereas it may only accurately be applied to a very limited number of painters of whom Jackson Pollock is the best known. In consideration of these facts, therefore, I prefer to mention painters in alphabetical order rather than in groups.

ALCOPLEY (b. 1910, Dresden) (Fig. X), is one of the many contemporary painters whose work is influenced by Japanese art. This shows itself in the use of calligraphic forms, the application of pigment in areas of pure colour and through a feeling of serenity. His work shows great sensitivity and the workings of a highly ordered mind enquiring into the nature and structure of things. Alcopley's paintings are distinguished, above all, by a feeling of novelty, freshness and vitality.

ALVA (b. 1901, Berlin) (Col. Pl.). Inevitably the work of the most original and truly creative artists tends to fall outside the categories already formulated by criticism. In the case of such painters a new terminology, a new outlook, a new set of values has to be evolved to correspond to the new world the painter opens before us. Alva is such a painter. His work displays the one element common to all great art—the power to command unflagging interest and to impose its personality on the viewer. The more involved the onlooker becomes in one of Alva's paintings the more his attention is drawn to the different levels of existence—"modes of being"—at which the object exists. An equation is created in each canvas between sensuousness and intellectualism, between rhythm and mass, form and colour. No two paintings are alike; this—his apparent inability to repeat himself—is evidence of the depth of thought devoted to each statement. Alva's abstract work—as his large retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Aachen last year showed—is the natural and logical development of the evolutionary process his painting has undergone over a period of thirty years. In the perceptive viewer, Alva's paintings are only likely to produce a consciousness of the total inadequacy

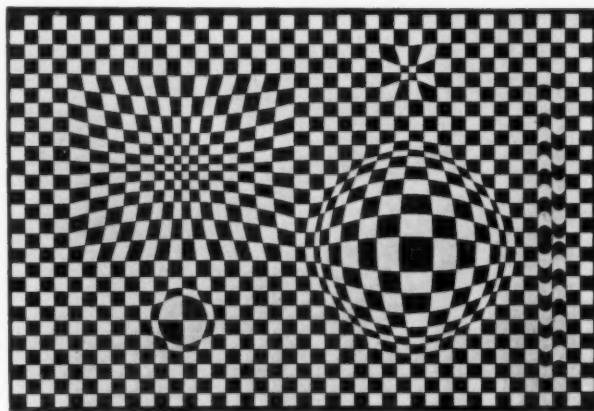


Fig. XIX. VICTOR VASARELY. Vega, 1957.
Galerie Denise René, Paris.

of words. No period in the history of art produces more than a limited number of lasting painters. It is my considered opinion that, in our epoch, Alva is one of these—a statement the truth of which, I believe, will be more apparent to later generations.

ROGER BISSIERE (b. 1888) is one of the most respected painters alive in Paris at the present time. His art is at once reflective, rational and, above all, strangely fundamental in a way which is difficult to express but impossible to ignore. His paintings convey the impression of having been conceived through a spiritual process and this may well be the basis of their very great appeal. The painting illustrated (Col. Pl.) is a typical example of his work of the last few years and shows the vertical and horizontal stresses he uses to create rhythm and harmonize the darkish, but not sombre, colours he uses with lyrical intensity.

DENNIS BOWEN (b. 1921). A young Englishman whose work shows great promise and which has been seen at the New Vision Centre and the Redfern Gallery. Technical accomplishment is not generally an outstanding feature of English painting but is obvious in Bowen's work, at present distinguished by the intensity and strength of his areas of pure colour.

Much of the work of the Russian SERGE CHARCHOUNE (b. 1888), is inspired by music, which he endeavours to interpret through his



Fig. XX. BRAM VAN VELDE. Composition, 1957.
Galerie Michel Warren, Paris.

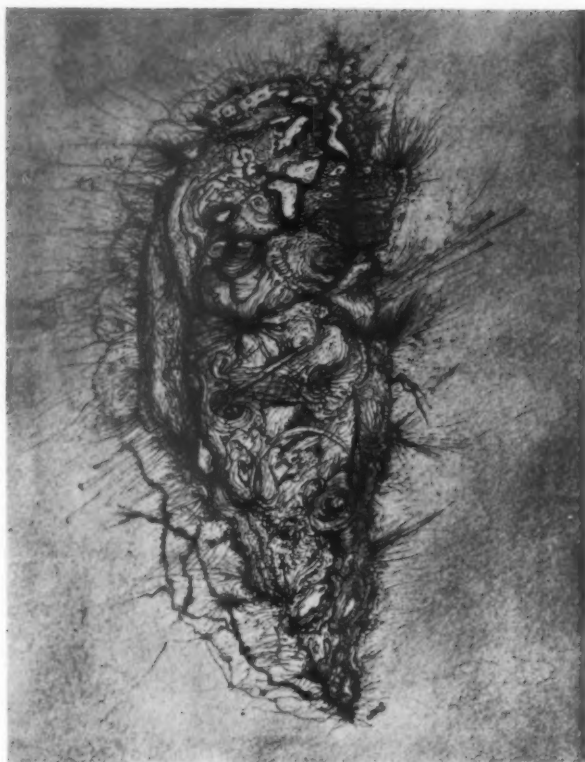


Fig. XXI. Wols. Drawing, c. 1942.
Arthur Tooth & Sons.

painting. Bach and Beethoven have been his chief influences, but despite this direct musical inspiration, Charchoune's work is not in the least mannerized or rigid but has great plastic value, emphasized by the light tones, almost monochromes, he employs (Fig. XI).

ALAN DAVIE (b. 1920), a Scot, is already well-known on the Continent. He generally uses darkish forms on a lighter ground in a highly expressionistic way displaying signs of what may be a Celtic anguish. He is not, however, an intuitive painter but highly articulate and his paintings are the fruit of much intellectual research, as will be realized by anyone who has listened to one of his lectures.

OLIVIER DEBRE (b. 1920, Paris) (see illustration on cover) has already earned an enviable reputation in Paris by the depth and consistency of his work. It has been said by a number of critics that Debré is a follower of de Staël. This is not so. There is an affinity between them but this is, in my view, the result of influences common to both—Chardin and Braque, to name two. At present (recent work at the Galerie Michel Warren) Debré is concerned with what he has termed *Personnages*—the attempt to set down in abstract terms the characteristics of a man or woman. Despite the difficulties that this presents—and, after all, it is perfectly reasonable to try to interpret an intangible in abstract terms—he has been remarkably successful. Debré's control of spatial elements and composition rivals that of any painter now working and it would not be unreasonable to expect him, when he has reached the height of his powers, to become a leader of contemporary painting.

JEAN DEYROLLE (b. 1911) is associated with the Galerie Denise René, the centre of the austere and sometimes geometric school of abstraction in Paris. Despite this he does not exhibit those characteristics in an extreme form but rather disposes his forms in a lyrical manner. This, applied to his extremely subtle and sensitive palette, gives his work a distinction obvious in any exhibition.

FAUTRIER (French, b. 1898) (Col. Pl.), is largely involved in creating abstract images of the human body. Although the "Nudes" in his large exhibition at the Galerie Rive Droite in 1956 bore no resemblance to the objects suggested by the academic title, they yet conveyed an idea distilled, as it were, to the essence. Fautrier employs a range of colour limited mainly to whites and blues which he applies in a heavy impasto, often mixed with sand to achieve an almost sculptural effect.

HANS HARTUNG (b. Leipzig 1904) (Fig. XII) is, in my opinion, among the best living painters. This may be a sweeping statement but for anyone who has seen his complete work and viewed his progress, difficult to deny. He approaches the extreme of painterly austerity yet is intensely humanistic and deeply moving. His uncompromising attitude towards the public and his work is illustrated by

his refusal to name any composition, preferring to number them, thus precluding the possibility of any representational relevance being attached. Hartung's command of technical means, including all graphic mediums, is the result of his dedication and the refusal to accept any but the highest standard from himself. It is to be hoped that the London public will not long be denied the opportunity of seeing his work in greater quantity.

AUGUSTE HERBIN (French, b. 1882) (Fig. XIII) is the doyen of living geometrical abstractionists. His work relies on the interdependence of his triangular, circular and rectangular shapes and areas of pure colour. These arrangements are extremely subtle and their apparent simplicity is proof of Herbin's achievement.

PAUL JENKINS (b. 1923, American) is one of those painters whose free handling of pigment is apt to lead to the application of the term *Tachiste*. In fact, his manipulation is entirely premeditated and used, in conjunction with strong colouring, to obtain a bold yet sensitive lyricism.

JOHN KOENIG (b. 1924, American) (Fig. XIV) paints in a style of deceptive simplicity. Generally he employs near-monochrome grounds on which are superimposed limited areas and lines of another, or a limited number, of complementary colours. His object led him, for some years, to paint in a rather rigid, formalized manner. In the last two years, however, his handling has become freer and his effects consequently more articulate. Koenig has always displayed those qualities of patience, hard work and perseverance which are at the bottom of all good painting, and it may therefore reasonably be expected that his work will continue to grow in importance.

ANDRE LANSKOY (b. 1902 in Moscow), was recently mentioned in this journal (July, 1957), and owing to shortage of space, cannot be further discussed. The same applies to ALFRED MANESSIER (see APOLLO, June, 1957).

RICHARD MORTENSEN (b. 1910, Copenhagen). The Galerie Denise René has already been mentioned in connection with geometrical abstract painting and another figure prominent there is Richard Mortensen, who paints in areas of pure colour often divided and intersected by lines of a darker colour. In a way which is difficult to explain he combines the utmost simplicity with the greatest subject matter. The originality of his work is proved by the inability of others to imitate it and its success by the fact that they have tried to do so (Fig. XV).

SERGE POLIAKOFF (b. Moscow, 1906) (Col. Pl.), a pupil at the Slade from 1935 to 1937, may be said to have founded a school of abstract painting. He has always striven towards the utmost economy of means yet achieves results of great force and sensitivity. His pigment is applied in planes of flat colour which produce powerful spatial arrangements and vibrant rhythms. The quality and intensity of his work has a universal appeal, reflected in the number of painters at present attempting to emulate him. Poliakoff is also the author of a number of lithographs which have an appeal no less than his paintings.

JACKSON POLLOCK (1912–1956, American) (Fig. XVI). The effect on the English public of the exhibition of modern American painting at the Tate Gallery in January 1956 may best have been summed up by the critic of a national Sunday newspaper who headed his column, "Yankee Doodles." It was an assessment which he later felt impelled to revise. I quote this because it is a common reaction of people on first coming face to face with the work of Jackson Pollock. His paintings were executed with complete disregard for the mock-sanctity usually attached to canvas. He painted in a frenzied manner,



Fig. XXII. ZAO WOU KI. *Nous Deux*, 1957.
Galerie de France, Paris.

AN INTRODUCTION TO ABSTRACT PAINTING

even pouring the paint on to a canvas laid on the floor to achieve the maximum effect in the least time. Yet his work has an undeniable fascination which may well be through the transmission of the painters' energy and will to the viewer.

PIERRE SOULAGES (b. 1919, French) has not, until recently, exhibited paintings other than those composed of broad linear arrangements of dark colour on monochrome grounds. That he has gained his position entirely through this one-man school is an illustration of what may be achieved in the very narrow field of a particular style.

NICOLAS DE STAEL (b. 1914, St. Petersburg, died Antibes 1955) (Fig. XVII) has already become a legend. Hundreds of painters throughout the world have imitated, or been influenced by, his painting. It is impossible to convey in the space available here any idea of the power or range of his work; it may simply be said that for many thousands of people he opened the doors to a new world of pure form and colour. The Galerie Jeanne Bûcher in Paris was the first to give him a one-man show which was followed by others at the Galerie Jacques Dubourg. The first London dealers to appreciate de Staël were Matthiesen, who exhibited 19 paintings in 1952. This was an enormous success—at least from the younger English painters' point of view, and the event was echoed in countless canvases throughout the British Isles. Subsequent exhibitions were held at Messrs. Tooth in 1956 and a large retrospective at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in the same year. The catalogue to the latter contained an important contribution to the literature on de Staël by Denys Sutton, a close friend of the painter during his life.

KUMI SUGAI (b. 1919, Japan) is one of the oriental painters whose work has had such an effect on others in Paris. His first one-man show at the Galerie Craven was received with enthusiasm and since that time his Japanese outlook has, under the influence of Paris, received further refinement. Sugai's painting contains a curious strength which lies under the calm oriental exterior (Col. Pl.).

ANTONIO TAPIES (b. 1923, Spanish) (Fig. XVIII), is one of the most influential young Spanish painters. Much of the sensuous quality of his work depends on the quality of his paint which is applied in the heaviest possible impasto. Employing colours generally sombre in tone, often monochromes, he is able to make his statement through the one element of pigment. Tapiès' painting is decisive and dramatic in the extreme. His first one-man show in Paris at the Galerie Stadler in 1956 was an immediate success which has since been consolidated by his recent exhibition at the same gallery.

VICTOR VASARELY (b. 1908, Hungary), is another of the Denise René group of artists. He attempts geometrically to create movement by the use of optical illusion and departs at times from the two- to the three-dimensional, in the form of constructions. He must be acknowledged as a pioneer and the most important practitioner of his chosen school (Fig. XIX).

The art of BRAM VAN VELDE (b. 1895, Dutch) (Fig. XX) presents no greater problem than the man. He rarely paints more than three or four compositions in a single year, each preceded by a concentrated intellectual effort. Van Velde integrates line and form in areas of pure and simple colour in a way which creates the impression that each part of the painting exists as a separate element in an atmosphere divorced from temporal things.

VIEIRA DA SILVA (b. 1908, Portuguese) (Col. Pl.) is one of the few contemporary women painters to earn an international reputation. Her chief concern in the past has been with space and its portrayal. To this end she painted chiefly rooms and tunnels disappearing into infinity; recently, however, she has progressed beyond any semblance of representation and has evolved a style of pure lyricism—if ever paintings may be said to sing, then it is true of Vieira da Silva. Current exhibition at the Hanover Gallery.

WOLS (1913–1951, b. Berlin) (Fig. XXI) was first influenced by Klee. Later, however, he freed himself from this and developed an inimitable personal style. His drawings occupy a world of their own composed of nervous energy bounded by tenuous lines and colours of unnatural brilliance. The recent show at the I.C.A. received the critical attention only usually accorded to the Impressionists, which, despite the fact that most critics seized the easy and obvious handle "Klee," was a compliment to one of the most extraordinary and fertile minds to be seen for many years.

ZAO WOU-KI (b. 1920, Pekin) (Fig. XXII) is an example of the Oriental employing the calligraphic forms of his own language in a non-representational way. All his work shows the same serenity and perfect taste—it would be impossible to imagine him overstating a line or a colour. His transparent pigments are so disposed as to be of the highest communicative value and lead out into the dream world of Chinese legend.

HERBERT ZANGS (b. 1924, German) gives, above all, a sense of vitality, energy and rhythm in his canvases. His one-man exhibition at the New Vision Centre earlier this year received critical approval more often reserved for famous names. The painting illustrated (Fig. XXIII) conveys the feeling of the incomprehensible immensity, yet unending flow, of the surrounding cosmos. Zangs limits himself to the simplest means yet is one of the most powerful and articulate of younger painters.



Fig. XXIII. HERBERT ZANGS. *Composition*, 1957.
Private Collection, London.

This account of abstract painting is far from comprehensive, the catalogue of contemporary painters omits many who are doing original work, and not all those who participated in the foundation of abstract painting have been mentioned—a catalogue embracing these categories would require a large book. Nor, as has already been stated, is it claimed that abstract painting is either better or worse than painting of other kinds. Furthermore, although the definition given at the commencement of this survey has been strictly adhered to, the distinction between the abstract and the representational is, in reality, far from rigid. Abstraction is partly a matter of degree. As already pointed out, there is in all modern original painting a tendency towards abstraction, or, if you prefer, away from naturalism. Some account has been given of this tendency in its purest form, and it is, indeed, a deeply rooted characteristic of XXth-century civilization. But it must be remembered that it has occurred in other civilizations and in other ages, as a fundamental element in many different types of art.

REFERENCES

- ¹ *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*. 1st English edn., trans. Michael Bullock, *Abstraction and Empathy*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953.
- ² *My italics*.
- ³ *Dictionnaire de la Peinture Abstraite*, Hazan, Paris, 1957. To be published shortly in English translation by Methuen.
- ⁴ *My italics*.
- ⁵ *Emergence from Chaos*, Gollancz, 1957, pp. 43–58. Holroyd appears to be strongly influenced by T. E. Hulme, who was in turn influenced by Worringer.
- ⁶ Hildebrand, *Problem der Form*.
- ⁷ Worringer, *ibid*.
- ⁸ *The Philosophy of Modern Art*, 1952.
- ⁹ For a detailed account of a most interesting and only recently discovered aspect of this period of Kandinsky's life, see *Burlington Magazine*, June 1957; and *Paris Match*, June 1957.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 101.
- ¹¹ Engl. trans. Michael Sadleir, London, 1914. Revised edn. New York, Wittenborn, Schultz, 1947, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*.
- ¹² See *Apollo*, June 1957, p. 265.
- ¹³ See *Apollo*, June 1957, *L'Oeuvre Figurative de Mondrian*, Michel Seuphor.
- ¹⁴ Since going to press, Nicholson has been awarded first prize at Sao Paulo.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A short list of books dealing with abstract art in general terms is here given, in addition to those already mentioned, for those readers who may wish to pursue the subject further.
- HERBERT READ, *Art Now*, 1st edn. 1933, new edn. 1950, Faber.
- HERBERT READ, *Icon and Idea*, Faber, 1955.
- CHARLES BIEDERMAN, *Art as the Evolution of Visual Knowledge*, U.S.A., 1948.
- MICHEL SEUPHOR, *L'Art Abstrait, Ses Origines, Ses Premiers Maîtres*, Maeght, Paris, 1949.
- MICHEL SEUPHOR, *Dictionary of Abstract Painting*, Methuen (to be published shortly).
- MICHEL SEUPHOR, *Piet Mondrian*, Thames & Hudson, n.d. (1957).
- MICHEL RAGON, *Expression et Non-figuration*, Paris, 1951.
- MICHEL TAPIÈS, *Un Art Autre*, Paris, 1952.
- A. H. BARR, JR., *Masters of Modern Art*, New York, 1954.
- MICHEL RAGON, *L'Aventure de l'Art Abstrait*, Paris, 1956.
- H. L. C. JAFFÉ, *De Stijl*, Tiranti, n.d. (1957).
- MARCEL BRION, *Art Abstrait*, Paris, 1956.
- ARNULF NEUWIRTH, *Abstract Art*, Methuen, 1956 (in the series *Movements in Modern Art*).
- THE AMERICAN ABSTRACT ARTISTS, *The World of Abstract Art*, Tiranti, 1957.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN PAINTING

By W. R. JEUDWINE

AN exhibition this month at Tooth's under the above title comes appropriately as a further illustration to the article on abstract painting in this issue. The six painters shown are naturally representative of only some of the almost infinitely various "recent developments," but though each of them has a personal style, they all belong to the non-geometrical wing of abstract painting. Riopelle, Borduas, Appel, Jenkins, and perhaps Stubbing adhere more or less loosely to the *tachistes*, or action-painters.

Riopelle is perhaps the best known. Born in 1924 in Montreal, he has had several one-man shows in Paris since the war and has been seen in London in mixed exhibitions. On his heavily worked canvases the rich pigments blend, fuse, overlap in a chequered rhythm, punctuated by areas of pure tone. The effect is a kind of aerial impressionism, and sometimes there is a deliberate intention to suggest an aerial view, as in the picture in the Guggenheim Collection recently seen at the Tate. In "La Vallée" (Fig. I) the idea of a landscape seen from the air is suggested not only by the title but in the composition, which is clearer and broader than in much of Riopelle's work.

It is, however, questionable whether colour patterns, texture, and a certain exuberant richness of handling are by themselves enough to make a picture that goes beyond the decorative. A loosely organized pattern soon becomes monot-



Fig. I. J. P. RIOPELLE. La Vallée.

onous and restless; one begins to long for clean-cut, clearly constructed forms. It is a problem which all *tachistes* have to face, and one which is perhaps not capable of solution. Obsessed by the perilous example of van Gogh, the *tachiste* attacks the canvas in a fine frenzy, believing that no more is needed than to let the hand run free and to exploit the physical qualities of paint. But the dynamic, eruptive quality of van Gogh is not to be arrived at by technical means; the intense nervous excitement which is the justification of all expressionist painting, and which in van Gogh amounted to madness, has not so far been achieved by the *tachistes*, his contemporary successors. We remain unmoved.

Borduas' "La Bouée" (Fig. II) is an example of an essentially abstract work with some figurative content. The form of the buoy stands out clearly and unmistakably, its outline broken on the right by areas of brownish and greenish paint, which in a naturalistic painting would have represented water splashing across it. The elements from which the painting has been made are easily discovered. In other works there is no trace of figuration—a few rather simple forms placed upon a background whose uniformity of tone is broken by the paint textures. Some years older than Riopelle, who has been much influenced by him, Borduas also is concerned primarily with colour; but his pictures have a more carefully organized formal content, and the quality of his paint is no less seductive for being more broadly used.

Paul Jenkins, with Sam Francis and Jackson Pollock, represents the American version of *tachisme*. The means used



Fig. II. P. E. BORDUAS. La Bouée, 1956.

(not by Jenkins in particular) to produce their pictures have come in for much ribald comment. We have been told that the paint is dripped on to the canvas from a pot, splashed on, trampled on—all of which is no doubt true. The inference is then drawn that pictures produced in this way can only be haphazard pieces of nonsense, which is demonstrably false. All sorts of odd methods can serve in the production of a coherent and successful painting, though it does not follow that there is some virtue inherent in the methods themselves. There is no reason why painters should not make use of the possibilities of accident—they have always done so—but we are only concerned with the result. The result in the case of Jenkins is vivid, translucent colour, through which emerge forms that have a curious



Fig. III. PAUL JENKINS. To Queequeg, 1957.



Fig. IV. M. CALLIYANNIS. Gris et Blanc, 1957.

organic quality, boneless, like jelly-fish, or submarine growths; indeed, the starting-point of many of Jenkins' pictures seems to be some imaginative, sub-aqueous world. Unlike Sam Francis, who will admit no suspicion of the figurative, Jenkins follows up any hints offered by forms that present themselves in the process of painting. His pictures have titles—"To Queequeg" (Fig. III), "The Leap"—but he did not set out with these titles in mind and a preconceived idea of what was going to be fitted to them. The titles come afterwards, and different ones might perhaps be found almost equally appropriate. (One is reminded, not altogether irrelevantly, of the Rorschach test used

by psychologists, in which conclusions are drawn from the different interpretations given to the same set of ink blots.) In the context of action-painting, it is significant that Jenkins' works do acquire, almost involuntarily, this remote figurative background, although their interest as works of art lies not in "subject," but in a brilliant inventiveness in colour and surface textures.

Manolis Calliyannis is a Greek who served in the R.A.F. during the war and subsequently studied architecture in Johannesburg. One has known him as an abstractionist not unlike Poliakoff, but recently he has partly turned away from abstraction. "Gris et Blanc" (Fig. IV), despite its title, is practically a straight landscape, distinguished by light tones, and discreet, sensitive colour. Of these six artists he is the most refined.

Of the remaining two, Appel draws attention, by sheer aggressiveness, to his rather *outré* imagery, as in "Femme Oiseau" (Fig. V). He exploits the consequences of his furious assault upon the canvas in a way not dissimilar to Jenkins, though in a style radically different. His colour is heavy and violent, with strident primary colours against black, and the paint is applied with an untidy abandon, which looks coarse beside the diaphanous effects of Jenkins and the lusciousness of Riopelle and Borduas.

Stubbing, a young Englishman, is as yet little known,



Fig. V. K. APPEL. Femme Oiseau, 1956.

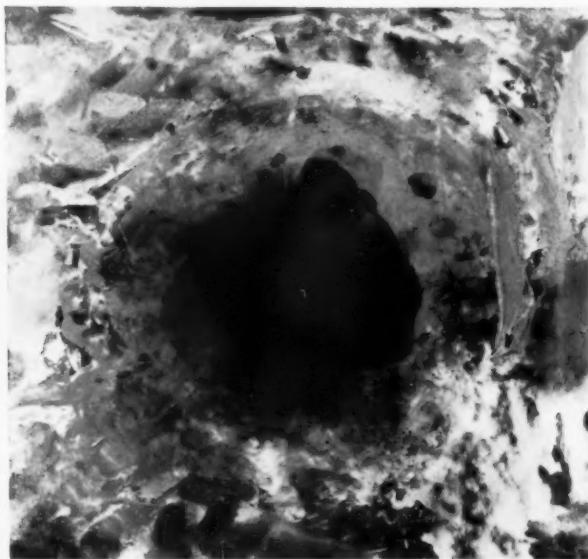


Fig. VI. A. STUBBING. Painting, 1957.

although he was responsible for the décor for the ballet "Song of Unending Sorrow" performed by the Marquis de Cuevas' company in Paris and more recently at Edinburgh. His paintings are divided between small panels (Fig. VI), quiet in colour and unaffectedly well painted, and enormous overall patterns, of *tachiste* descent, in which the paint is applied thickly in superimposed layers. Great size can be impressive, but a fashion seems to have started with some painters (surely not with their patrons) for huge canvases; many of them, one feels, would gain by being drastically reduced.

It has been suggested that there is to-day a drift away from abstraction. The present exhibition lends no support to this view, but it does show that there is no hard and fast distinction between the abstract and the figurative. Figurative elements are always creeping in, and in this kind of painting, which can so easily degenerate into mere playing about with the medium, it seems as though some kind of figurative, or at least formal, background can often provide a helpful measure of discipline. The presence or absence of it makes no difference to the nature of the picture—a highly personal exploration of colour and texture in paint—but a theme, however tenuous, is necessary to the improvisation. All the works illustrated might really be called pictures of paint; they are at one end of the scale in contemporary abstract painting; at the other lies the geometric, which strenuously avoids all the qualities here exploited to the utmost.



Fig. I. ARTIST UNKNOWN. *A Family Group on a Terrace*, c. 1740-45. 36½ × 46½ in.
Courtesy Art Institute of Chicago.

CONVERSATION PIECES IN SEARCH OF A PAINTER

by RALPH EDWARDS

ENGLISH conversation pictures of the XVIIIth century have long been popular and in great demand, but this kind of portraiture still remains to a large extent an uncharted field; a few familiar names are apt to be constantly invoked as attributions, almost in a generic sense and with little regard for evidence. There is an understandable reluctance to publish examples (save by owners seeking information in "correspondence" columns) which cannot at present be firmly assigned, thus making a public confession of ignorance; though some of such pictures are of exceptional interest, and their publication may lead to conclusive comparisons and help in time to dispel the prevailing ignorance.

It may therefore be worth while to pass briefly in review a few "problem pictures" of the first half of the XVIIIth century, even though they may admit of no final solution. Only in one case can an attribution be made with any degree of confidence. All these problematical "conversations" date within about 1740-50, and it would be easy to add a considerable number, which are equally baffling, falling within this single decade.

"The Party on a Terrace" (Fig. I), a fairly large picture, though it may well have been painted in England, is probably by an immigrant artist from the Low Countries and has a distinct if indefinable alien air'. While no really close parallel can be cited, perhaps the nearest is "The

Musical Party" at Northwick Park, said to represent Earl Tylney and his friends on the terrace of Wanstead House.² This has long been ascribed, but on no very cogent evidence, to Joseph Francis Nollekens, father of the sculptor, who was born in Antwerp and came over to settle in England in 1733. He painted a number of fancy pictures, *pastiches* of Watteau and Pannini, some of them signed and of no great distinction. Probably he may be credited with a copy, meticulously close, though the sitters are in a different setting, of Mercier's "Music Party" in the Royal Collection, which is surely too tight and insensitive in handling to have been done by Mercier.³ These pictures afford no very convincing reasons for assigning Captain Spencer-Churchill's conversation to "Old Nollekens". It is more lively and fluent in handling, while the figures are skilfully grouped, but a comparison of imitative fancy subjects with a conversation is far from being conclusive, even if the stylistic resemblance is not close.

Though an attribution is not justifiable, there are points of resemblance which at least suggest the possibility that this conversation and the "Tea Party" may be by the same painter—Nollekens or another. In the Northwick picture there is a stately Palladian country house in the background, which seems quite irreconcilable with extant reproductions of Wanstead,⁴ a double flight of steps supporting statues and urns. On the right of the "Tea Party"



Fig. II. ARTIST UNKNOWN. *A Family Group*, c. 1745. 25½ × 30½ in.
Courtesy Irene, Countess of Plymouth.

the vast and grotesque baroque gateway might almost be a caricature of one of William Kent's more extravagant designs, but the feathery foliage (much more prominent in the "Tea Party") is noticeably similar. The sitters in both conversations are very much alive, even with a hint of *espieglerie*, and there are certain similarities of pose; though all this falls far short of positive identification. Incidentally, the young woman returning with her escort from riding seems to be wearing the cloth riding habit, which supplanting camlet or silks is said not to have come into vogue until about the mid-century,⁶ and the servant stooping to lift a large metal pan (which looks too shallow for a wine-cooler) recalls a motif favoured by Gawen Hamilton, to whom, however, the picture cannot be plausibly assigned: the types are not his, nor is the grouping, and I know of no conversation by him with the sitters represented in the open air.

The charming little conversation belonging to Irene, Countess of Plymouth (Fig. II) was until lately lent by her to the National Museum of Wales. It is reproduced in a colour plate, which gives a very fair idea of the original, in the late G. C. Williamson's *English Conversation Pictures* (1931, Pl. 7), and there assigned *tout court* to Joseph Highmore—an attribution no longer maintained. In his "Pamela" series of about the same date (the pictures were engraved in 1745) and a little conversation, "The Rich Family," attributed to Hogarth for a century and a half but certainly to be transferred to Highmore,⁷ types, brushwork and composition are all very different. And if it be objected that the "Pamelas" are fancy subjects, thus enabling the artist to present his own ideal type, it should be observed that in

the so-called "Rich Family," which must be accepted as portraiture, the young mother might well pass as a sister of Richardson's graceful heroine.

Much of the charm of Lady Plymouth's picture depends on the colour—a pretty subdued harmony with olive green, russet browns and old rose predominating, and one for which Highmore might quite conceivably have been responsible. But, for the former attribution, "painter unknown" is rightly substituted. It must be allowed that we have little to judge Highmore's conversations by,⁸ but his handling of paint, a dragging touch with rather sharply accented folds in the draperies, is very characteristic in works on a comparable scale, while the tranquil calm of these sitters contrasts with his lively animated poses; nor is the minute rendering of the still-life what we should expect in a conversation by this gifted painter. Still, with such limited data, it would be distinctly hazardous to pronounce positively that this little picture is not by Highmore.

"An Assembly of Artists" in the Ashmolean (Fig. III) was formerly ascribed to Hogarth, an attribution supported by that great contemporary patron of engravers, Alderman Boydell, to whom it once belonged.⁹ By a list of names in the upper right hand corner, eight out of the 15 sitters can be identified, including Gawen Hamilton, William Kent and Vanderbank. As the *Catalogue of Paintings* observes, the presence of Kent (if indeed we may accept the list as reliable, for the portraits are too sketchy to allow of iconographic tests) rules out Hogarth as the painter, for he and the architect were at daggers drawn; but apart from such internal evidence he is excluded on the evidence of style. The "Assembly" is a sketch in subdued colours thinly put



Fig. III. ARTIST UNKNOWN. An Assembly of Artists, c. 1740.
24 × 29 in.
Courtesy Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

on, and it is only necessary to compare it with a summary study undoubtedly by Hogarth, almost in juxtaposition with it at the Ashmolean, to see that the former attribution was rightly disallowed: rather misleadingly, it is still retained on the frame. In this study, probably for "The Suicide of the Countess" in *Mariage à la Mode*, there is a bravura of brushwork and flickering highlights with touches of impasto very unlike the tame and rather flaccid handling in the "Assembly."

There is a case, I think, for holding that whoever may have painted this group of artists was also responsible for the very similar subject (Fig. IV), formerly at Lowther Castle. Almost monochromatic, the dull green of the tablecloth alone relieving the darks; poses, drawing, handling and types represented all closely correspond: the unknown man seated on the right in the picture at Oxford might well pass as identical with the one holding a quill in the smaller group.

These "assemblies" cannot plausibly be attributed to Gawen Hamilton on the evidence afforded by his well-known "Club of Artists" (dated 1713-15) in the National Portrait Gallery, or his other conversations, which are highly finished, formal in grouping, with inert, rigid poses, and altogether very distinctive in style. Marcellus Laroon has been suggested, but the same objection, perhaps to a lesser extent, applies. But if nothing closely comparable can be cited in his authenticated *œuvre* the tell-tale "poker work," the nervous, emphatic touch that emphasizes the contours, is entirely absent, and though the paint is thinly applied, there is none of that peculiar effect, almost as of a "stained drawing" which is characteristic of his technique. True, Laroon lived to be very old (1679-1772) and these mannerisms are most conspicuous in his later works (some of which are dated towards the end of his career), and they are not at all noticeable in the earliest pictures that can be assigned to him.¹⁰ But comparison between an artist's large, finished pictures and hasty, unidentified studies are apt to be misleading—it is quite a different matter when, as in the case of Hogarth, we have both authenticated pictures and studies to allow of such comparisons—and though Laroon's familiar technique seems to have been adopted in his later phase, we lack valid stylistic criteria which would justify the attribution of these "assemblies" to him. The Ashmolean example may be taken to date from about 1740 and the other, on costume alone, from about the same time, but the cabriole legs of the stool end in unequivocal volutes, a form of terminal very rare on English furniture before the middle of the following decade.¹¹ Possibly the club, or members of a learned society, here represented in the matter of costume, were not up to date. This conversation is distinctly suggestive of a descent from the Dutch *Gruppenporträt*.

If with these two instances we must again confess defeat, with Fig. V we have a picture—not strictly a conversation, for it is of that closely allied *genre*, a stage scene—which may be attributed with some degree of assurance. We must deal with it briefly for considerations of space. This is a scene from Molière's comedy, *Le Médecin Malgré Lui*, and represents the moment (Act 2, Scene 8) when Sganarelle, while professing to reject the money pressed upon him by Géronte, covertly accepts the fee—*tendant sa main derrière*, to quote the stage directions. The painter presents him without the doctor's robe, under which, in the play, he extends his hand.

It is recorded that this scene was represented in one of the large pictures in the Supper Boxes at Vauxhall which were designed, at least in part, by Gravelot and painted by Hayman: it was engraved by F. Truchy after Hayman in 1743-4. Henri Gravelot was perhaps the chief transmitter of French influence in the first half of the century (he came over about 1732), but through drawings and engravings rather than pictures; though Vertue records that soon after his arrival he had already painted "a small piece or two which gives some hopes of his succeeding in small history and conversations."

Gravelot was an accomplished and elegant draughtsman,



Fig. IV. ARTIST UNKNOWN. A Literary Club or Society, c. 1740.
14 × 18½ in.
Courtesy Messrs. Arthur Tooth & Sons.

CONVERSATION PIECES IN SEARCH OF A PAINTER

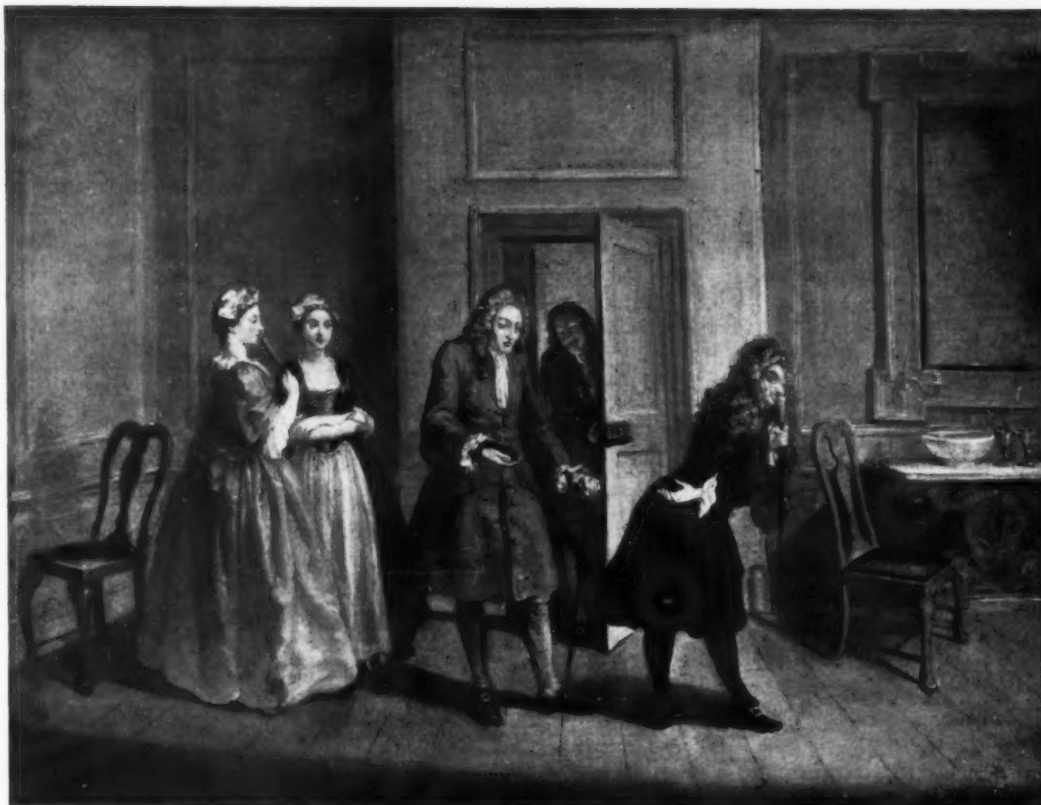


Fig. V. (Above) "Le Medecin Malgré Lui," here attributed to Henri Gravelot. 10 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 14 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.
 Courtesy Sir Robert Barlow.

Fig. VI. (Below) ARTIST UNKNOWN. A Family at Dinner, c. 1745-50.
 Courtesy John Quilter, Esq.



but what little we know of his painting is rather disappointing.¹² Among the Vauxhall pictures was "Building Houses with Cards," the engraving of which states that it was designed by Gravelot and painted by Hayman.¹³ A small picture formerly at Hutchinson House was a much reduced version of this subject. This, if far from being in pristine state, is admirably composed, pretty in colour and lightly brushed in. A drawing by Gravelot for one of the sitters exists,¹⁴ and it may certainly be credited to him and not to Hayman. Though the large supper box scene of the "False Doctor" was painted by Hayman, that the miniature version is by Gravelot, in my opinion, is scarcely open to doubt: obviously too as a Frenchman he is likely to have been responsible for the choice of this theme. The setting is entirely English¹⁵, but it has, like the "Building Houses," a touch of Gallic grace and a similar light dexterity in the use of the medium—very unlike Hayman, a rather coarse executant, whose conversations and theatrical scenes are really unmistakable.

Here documentation provided by Miss D. M. Stuart and Professor Lawrence Gowing allows of the identification of three small works, a conversation and two fancy subjects; and so to the formation of a small nucleus of Gravelot's *œuvre*, which we may hope will be added to hereafter.

We will close this reiterated confession of failure with yet another enigma, the attractive little picture of a family party at dinner, seen in Fig. VI, a subject rarely represented in conversations. Here again we have a room with large moulded panels and the date is very near the middle of the century. The food about to be dispensed by the parson is a joint of boiled beef with carrots, realistically rendered. Of a traditional English addiction the number of dogs is sufficient evidence—the one on the right, a water spaniel (now called a poodle), the others not perhaps identifiable with any modern breed. The colour is sober, the pretty girl in dark green on the right and the footman in red and buff providing the most positive notes.

Here there is none of Gravelot's Gallic vivacity: the

figures look as if sunk in a meditative calm and prepared to spend hours over their meal. Only a signed or documented example closely comparable would be likely to establish the identity of the painter. This discussion of a few among the innumerable unidentified conversations of the first half of the century (there are vastly more in the second) may serve to indicate how, in spite of the interest awakened in this kind of portraiture in recent years, the subject is still very largely enveloped in obscurity—like so much else in the history of the English school.

¹ I judge from a photograph.

² *Conversation Pieces*, Sacheverell Sitwell, 1936, Fig. 80, and p. 103. Earl Tylney was Nollekens's chief patron. An exact replica of the Northwick picture is in the possession of Lady Charlotte Bonham-Carter.

³ *The Burlington Magazine*, Nov. 1948. Mercier's "Music Party," Ralph Edwards, pp. 308–312. A signed Fancy subject by Nollekens is reproduced (Fig. 2).

⁴ The matter of attribution to "Old Nollekens" is further complicated by the fact that his father, who trained him, lived in England for many years and, according to Vertue, painted "conversations, etc." before through lack of sufficient patronage, he went to Rome and settled there. Walpole Soc., Vertue, Vol. III, p. 137.

⁵ *Vitruvius Britannicus*, I, 21, 26; *ibid.*, III, 39–40. Also *Growth of the English House*, J. Alfred Gotch, 1909, Fig. 167. *British Architects and Craftsmen*, Sacheverell Sitwell, 1944, Fig. 127. The double flight at Wanstead shown by Colin Campbell are rusticated and on a far larger scale.

⁶ *Connoisseur Period Guides*, Vol. III. Early Georgian. 1957. Costume. C. Willett Cunningham. P. 136.

⁷ *Burlington Magazine*, July 1957. An Attribution to Highmore. Ralph Edwards. Pp. 234–7.

⁸ While his single portraits are numerous, his portrait groups, large or small, are very rare. An early and important example, dated 1736 and on the scale of life, representing the widow Lancelot Lee of Coton and his family, is at Coton Hall, Salop. (Reproduced *Country Life*, October 4th, 1956, p. 722.)

⁹ *Artists and their Friends*, Whitley 1928, Vol. I, p. 70.

¹⁰ The earliest is the "Musical Assembly" painted about 1715, in the collection of H.R.H. The Duchess of Kent. See *Early Conversation Pictures*, Ralph Edwards, 1954. Fig. 79 and p. 165.

¹¹ It is found on "French Chairs" in the 1st Edition of Chippendale's *Director*, 1754.

¹² "Captain Hervey Taking Leave of his Family" at Ickworth. *Conversation Pieces*, S. Sitwell. Fig. 41, where it is assigned to Zoffany, was finished and apparently in the main designed by Gravelot, having been begun by Liotard (see *Molly Lepell*, D. M. Stuart, 1936, pp. 221–4. So far, this is the only conversation for which Gravelot is known to have been responsible.

¹³ See *The Burlington Magazine*, January, 1953, pp. 4–17. "Hogarth, Hayman and the Vauxhall Decorations" by Lawrence Gowing.

¹⁴ See *ibid.*, April 1953, p. 142. The drawing is in the collection of Mr. L. G. Duke.

¹⁵ The console table in the background, with the top supported by intertwined dolphins, is of a rare English type, c. 1725–30, of which there is an example, lent by the Duke of Buccleuch, in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

A SHAFT from APOLLO'S BOW: Where there's a Wheel, there's a Way

OUR apologies that this column is becoming almost monotonously a record of new nonsense in art. Our excuse must be that we happen to believe that the fine arts are an expression of the human spirit concerned with some aspect of truth or beauty; that art is a serious subject. Modern æsthetic freedom opened the door to all manner of new kinds of artist. Also to all manner of charlatanism and ballyhoo. An influential section of the intelligentsia pompously supports any outrage. The social thing is that a great deal of public money is allowed to be wasted at the dictates of this inverted intellectual snobbery. So, at some risk of repetition, we report the latest. At some risk, too, of not being believed, for inevitably the angle of this steep place increases, and the pace of the possessed accelerates. The present point reached is that the Institute of Contemporary Art has an exhibition of the work of "Betsy," the American chimpanzee who is quite the thing as an Action Painter in her home town of Baltimore and in New York, and of her rival "Congo" of the London Zoo, who has similarly been encouraged to smear paint on to canvas. Alongside this, or perhaps behind or beyond it, a twenty-three-year-old student—if that is the word—at the Royal College of Art has been Action Painting by (a) pouring paint and a tin of printer's ink on a large canvas laid on the floor, (b) dancing, jumping and skipping on this, (c) riding over it on a bicycle and skidding to distribute the agglomerate mess, (d) soaking it in paraffin, and (e) scattering sand on it. He offers it for sale at £100, but will take an offer of £70. His photograph, performing on it with the bicycle, has appeared in the Press.

To be just, let it be admitted that the anthropoid daubs at the I.C.A. and the whole monkey business there is being exploited as a quasi-scientific experiment to discover the

origins of human art. It is surely unfortunate for the Action Painters whose *dernier cri* the I.C.A. so strenuously advocates, that this almost mindless beginning is so exactly like its end. There may be some resignations. But the gaps can evidently be filled at Regent's Park, and I am sure the more progressive and wealthy Daughters of the Revolution will sponsor Betsy's membership. Just one thought: if "Congo," as he nearly did the other day at his Press view, does kick a hole in his artistic creations, this might start a new school; for the problem of where we go from here must be getting rather serious.

The matter of the *jeunesse dorée* who perform with boots and bicycle at the Royal College of Art is another question. Sir Alfred Munnings, approached for his views on the achievement, understandably referred the question to the Minister of Education, pointing out that the art schools are costing the country several million pounds a year to run and that if the result is to be attained as simply as by skidding on a bicycle there was one obvious means of cutting Government spending. Let it be added that not only is the official cost of this youth's art education down on the taxpayer's bill, but that he is reported as State-aided to pay his fees at the College. And he is twenty-three years old, and so might reasonably be expected by now to be contributing in manpower to the production drive of which we hear quite often in governmental and similar exhortations. Well, of course, if driving your bike across a mess of paint on a canvas, receiving a State grant of several hundreds a year, and training at a college with working costs of tens of thousands, is what is meant by the production drive, no wonder Britain is going bankrupt. Still, no sacrifice is too great in the cause of the expansion of our visual sensibilities.

CERAMIC CAUSERIE

A VISITING EXPERT

A SHORT paragraph that may be of interest to historians of ceramics was printed in the *General Evening Post* of May 14, 1752 (No. 2877). It ran:

"A Chinese has lately arrived here who has offered to instruct the English in making of China, equal in every Respect to that brought from thence."

No further notice was taken of this unnamed visitor in succeeding issues of the newspaper, and no mention of him or of his activities has come to light from other sources.

He would seem to have been a forerunner of "Mr. Chitqua," who is known to have made painted clay models, and who came to England in August, 1769. In a letter dated November of that year, Thomas Bentley wrote to his partner, Josiah Wedgwood, and said:

"We are every day finding out some ingenious man or curious piece of workmanship, all of which we endeavour to make subservient to our manufacture. I have not time to name the things we have seen; but one great curiosity I cannot omit. I mean a Chinese portrait modeller, lately arrived from Canton, one of those artists who make the Mandarin figures that are brought to England, a pair of which you may remember to have seen at Mr. Walley's shop. He intends to stay here some years, is in the Chinese dress, makes portraits (small busts in clay, which he colours) and produces very striking likenesses with great expedition. I have paid him three visits and had a good deal of conversation with him; for he speaks some English and is a good-natured, sensible man, very mild in his temper and gentle in his motions."

Chitqua was patronized by George III, exhibited a bust at the Royal Academy in 1770, and was present at the first official dinner of that body which was held in the same year. In 1771, he visited the newly-established Royal Academy schools at Old Somerset House, where he "had the honour to have his portrait introduced by Mr. Zoffany into a capital picture of the members of that noble institution, which that eminent artist is executing for a great personage." The painting was made for George III, and remains to this day in the Royal collection.

It is known that Chitqua returned to the Far East in the early 1770s, and that he died from poisoning in 1796. The story of his unfortunate attempt to return to his native land, wearing Oriental costume which the sailors thought would bring bad luck to the ship in which he proposed to travel, is told by William Whitley in *Artists and Their Friends in England, 1700-1790* (two volumes, 1928: vol. I, pages 269-272).

The unknown Chinaman who preceded him in visiting England did not achieve the popular success of Chitqua. Perhaps a record of his name and of any instruction he may have given in the art of making porcelain will be brought to light one day and enable us to learn a trifle more about the origins of the ceramic industry in this country.

PORCELAIN AND SILVER

There is no doubt that the earliest makers of porcelain in Europe based many of their pieces on current patterns of silver. The first Meissen tea-pots, for instance, are close imitations of contemporary Augsburg originals, and early Bow and Chelsea tea-pots, cream-jugs and sauce-boats closely follow silver prototypes of London manufacture. Many of the moulded patterns in relief on china were copies of *repoussé* work on silver, and the elaborate crustacean modelling on salt-cellars and other pieces from Chelsea in the 1750's were first made in the metal by Nicolas Sprimont. Even the famous "Goat and Bee" jugs from the same factory would seem to have been no more than porcelain imitations of a silver original; one such, which was shown at the Cheyne Exhibition in 1924, bore the date-letter for 1737 and the maker's mark of Edward Wood.

Later in the century, at Derby and elsewhere, the same basis for design was accepted, and the tea-pot and water-jug shapes of the last decades of the XVIIIth century can be paralleled exactly in contemporary pieces of silver. Equally, in the early XIXth century the like process continued, and the domestic wares made at New Hall and other factories follow precisely as before.

The close link between the patterns of the two dissimilar materials was no doubt promoted and fostered by those who were



Chelsea "Goat and Bee" cream-jug: see PORCELAIN AND SILVER, Horsham Museum, Sussex.

at first concerned in the sale of both wares: the jewellers and silversmiths, and the "Toymen." Even after the selling of china became the province of men who dealt in little else except, in most cases, the selling of glass, the treatment of porcelain as a rare and precious stone seems never to have been forgotten, and the initial competition that it faced with silver would seem to have left an ineffaceable impression.

This affinity was further stressed with the introduction and continued popularity of "Silver Lustre." The coating of common pottery with a metallic glaze containing reduced platinum salts produces a convincing imitation of real silverware, provided the article is not examined too closely. This "poor man's plate" was introduced in about 1810, and surviving examples of that date closely and realistically approximate to metal originals of the first decade of the XIXth century.

It should be added that jugs and pots were not by any means the only objects made of china that owed their shapes to silver forerunners. Plates and dishes, tureens, and knife-handles and spoons, were all carefully copied both in England, on the Continent and in the Far East.

CHINAMAN AND VINTNER

Specialization in the field of business enables the shop-keeper to devote his time and knowledge to a single chosen subject, but undoubtedly much of the romance has gone from the customer's side of the counter. Gone are the days when the seller of books stocked patent medicines as a side-line (or was it vice-versa?), and it is doubtful if one will ever again find a china shop in this country that sells wines. The following notice appeared in a newspaper published in 1755:

"TO BE SOLD

CYPRUS WINE, for Ready Money. By THOMAS CROSS, Chinaman, at the Crown, the second Door above Ludgate, at 21s. per Dozen Pints, Bottles included; a Pint may be had for a Taste at 2s. Likewise some very good Burgundy at 38s. per Dozen Quarts, Bottles included; a single Bottle may be had for a Taste at 3s. 6d."

GEOFFREY WILLS.

THE AUTUMN ANTIQUES FAIR, CHELSEA

THE seventh Chelsea Fair, held as in previous years in Chelsea Town Hall, will be opened on Wednesday, October 9th, by the Duke of Bedford, who has kindly lent the painting by

Canaletto reproduced below.

The fair will be open daily (except Sundays) until October 19th, from 11 a.m. to 7.30 p.m.



CANALETTO. Venice: The Entrance to the Grand Canal with S. Maria della Salute. Lent by the Duke of Bedford.

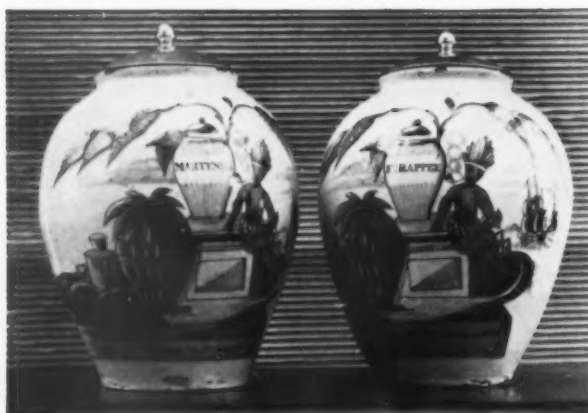
Two of a set of four engraved English ormolu candlesticks. Regency period. Height 8 in.

MARGARET STEVEN, 5a Thackeray Street, W.8.

Stand 20.

Dutch Tobacco Jars with the V.O.C. monogram of the Dutch East India Company.

H. LONGDEN, 85 Wigmore Street, W.1.
Stand 25.



CHELSEA ANTIQUE DEALERS' FAIR

CLARA PEETERS. Peaches in a Dish. Signed and dated 1638. Panel $15\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{4}$ in.

Exhibited Kunsthau, Zürich, 1956, No. 198.

ALFRED BROD, LTD., 36 Sackville Street, Piccadilly, W.1.

Stand 44.

German silver gilt tankard and cover with ivory sleeve and finial. Dated 1673.

H. S. WELLBY, 22 Brompton Arcade, S.W.3.

Stand 21.

An XVIIIth century mahogany bachelor's chest. Height 33 in. Width 31 in. Depth 18 in.

ARTHUR BRETT AND SONS, LTD.,

42 Saint Giles, Norwich.

Stands 8 and 9.



APOLLO



A William and Mary walnut chest of drawers. Width 34 in.
**JOSEPHINE GRAHAME-BALLIN, 21 George Street,
 St. Albans, Herts.**
 Stands 37 and 38.



George II gilt mirror, c. 1740. Adam mantelpiece in pine,
 c. 1770. A pair of Ch'ien Lung seals in soapstone, c. 1780.
IAN ASKEW, 6 Queen's Elm Parade, Chelsea, S.W.3.
 Stands 30 and 33.



Mahogany secretaire chest, c. 1770. Width 33 in.
PAUL FRANK, LTD., 26 Gloucester Road, S.W.7.
 Stand 10.



A late XVIIIth-century child's mail cart.
KAY KERSHAW, Bury, Sussex.
 Stand 34.

CHELSEA ANTIQUE DEALERS' FAIR

ENGLISH SCHOOL, c. 1750. A Picnic Party.

ALEXANDER PODD & SON,
47 and 57 High Street South, Dunstable, Beds.

Stands 1 and 2.



A pair of Chinese dark green jade birds and a
jade figure. Height 19 in.

ALAN MARTIN AND OLIVER BENTLEY,
36, 40 and 46, Waterloo Street, Leicester.

Stand 45.

A XVIth-century oak hutch, with withdrawing top.

MAURICE GOLDSTONE,
King Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

Stand 14.



THE LIBRARY SHELF

DIDEROT AS AN ART CRITIC

By DENYS SUTTON

Diderot: *Salons*, volume 1, 1759. 1761. 1763. Ed. JEAN SEZNEC and JEAN ADHEMAR. Oxford University Press. £6 6s.

FEW men of letters in the XVIIIth century are as attractive as Denis Diderot, the prolific "philosophe," and few managed to write such good sense about such a variety of topics. Nowhere do his personal touch and sensibility come over so well as in his art criticism—the celebrated accounts of the Salons that he composed for Grimm's *Correspondance Littéraire*.

The task set him by the Baron was no easy one—namely, to pen a lively and readable account of the works of art that appeared in the great artistic event of the season, the Paris Salon, which, complete with descriptions of the more important items, was to be perused by a capricious and critical audience. Yet this mode of writing, though it tired him towards the end, was one that suited Diderot's talents and he brought to it a full mind and a considerable artistic experience.

In the XVIIIth century, professional art critics were few and far between—as M. Adhémar points out in his lucid and learned introduction to this, the first volume, of the new and elaborate edition of Diderot's *Salons*. This did not mean that comments on the exhibitions were sparse, but that most of the brochures which appeared (from 1738 onwards) were uninformed. Also, their severity was such that the academicians, who were the only artists permitted to show at the Salon, persuaded the authorities that critical essays had to be submitted for censorship, like any other writings.

No such impediment, fortunately lay in Diderot's way: he wrote not for publication (although he never doubted that his *Salons* would be read by posterity) but for private circulation outside France. (All the same, his critiques were in fact read by certain members of the Paris "haut monde.") Thus he felt free to display a critical objectivity and adopt a frankness of expression that would have proved difficult under existing conditions, all the more so as he was on friendly terms with many contemporary artists. He made good use of his liberty and never, as far as one can judge, abused his position; his criticism may be severe but it is not malicious. His was a knack of taking an artist down a peg or two and of reminding a man of his limitations, as in his comment on Roslin's portrait of Margny.

Diderot was fortunate in so far as he was in sympathy, broadly speaking, with the main trends of the day. He was clear in his own mind that French art was in the van of the European movement and he was particularly well disposed, for instance, to the revival of history painting and the emergence of the Neo-classical taste that occurred in the second part of the century and gradually superseded the Rococo. He was thus well placed to assess modern art, as it then was, and his writings provide a valuable account of artistic events at this

period.

MM. Adhémar and Sez nec have accomplished their task in an exemplary fashion. Firstly, they have been at pains to establish a correct text and, secondly, to print the catalogues of the relevant Salons. Also, whenever possible, they have identified the present whereabouts of the works discussed and provided illustrations of them. Unlike the original readers of the *Correspondance*, therefore, we are able to refer to plates and compare the critics' words with the paintings and sculpture treated. In so doing, we may examine what is nothing less than a broad panorama of French painting during a vital period, for all the notable artists of the day made their appearance at the Salon.

Unlike so many art writers of the epoch, Diderot was not concerned to discuss general principles alone: he was compelled by the nature of his task to face up to actual works of art. Moreover, he had to hold the attention: in short, he was forced (and it was no task for this craftsman of letters) to write readable prose that conveyed impressions and information without overtaxing the capacities of his audience. He succeeded admirably and the claim that he is the first real art critic is justified.

Not that he composed off the cuff. In this respect, he enjoyed an enviable advantage over his latter-day colleagues. Whereas the modern critic must visit a series of exhibitions and write with one eye on the clock, Diderot had time in which to chew over his findings. In his stimulating assessment of Diderot's role as a critic, M. Sez nec emphasizes the care which went to the preparation of a salon. Diderot would visit the exhibition for days and sometimes weeks on end, scribbling notes and sounding the opinions of artists and friends alike. Then the assembled material would be welded together into a series

of observations, long or short, on the artists present and their works. With considerable skill he would vary his style from one item to another so that the prose would to some extent match the piece treated; at times, he would indulge in an evocative purple patch (as in his passage on Vernet), at others in a pithy conversational comment. When the unfortunate Bachelier forsook his accustomed rôle as a charming painter of flower pictures and went in for "encaustic" painting (following the principles expounded by Callus), Diderot hit just the right tone: "M. Bachelier, mon ami, croyez moi, revenez à vos tulipes." Or when Greuze, whom he admired so much, painted his wife "en vestale," his ironic spirit was equally alert. "Greuze, mon cher, vous moquez de nous." . . . "Ce morceau ferait honneur à Coypel, mais il ne vous en fait pas." Two birds with one stone.

Naturally with an exhibition ranging from some 200 to 400 items, Diderot was forced to be selective. "Voici ma règle,"



DENIS DIDEROT, 1713-1784.

The Hulton Press Library.

he said. "Je m'arrête devant un morceau de peinture ; si la première impression que j'en reçois va toujours en s'affaiblissant, je le laisse : si au contraire, plus je regarde, plus il me captive, si je ne le quitte à regret, s'il me rappelle quand je l'ai quitté, je le prends." His approach to a work of art, then, was based on the evidence of his sensations : "Regardons, regardons longtemps ; sentons et jugeons." Again he acknowledged that "Il faut du temps pour apprendre à regarder un tableau, plus de temps que, à sentir un morceau de poésie."

But Diderot's attachment to the immediacy of sensation did not mean that he dispensed with artistic principles. His method was analytical. When examining a picture, for instance, he would first describe the main figures and then the subsidiary ones, going on to deal with the characters rendered and the expression represented and the light and shade, finally coming to the impression made by the whole composition. In this way he was able to secure a well-balanced view of the entire picture, and in doing so he relied on his technical expertise, garnered from his artist friends, and on his knowledge of earlier art, culled from his acquaintance with private collections and engravings after the Old Masters.

In general, he accepted the customary academic view of an artistic hierarchy : that one genre was superior to the other. "Remove from Dutch and Flemish paintings their artistic magic and they would remain horrible 'croûtes.' Poussin could lose all his harmony, yet the *Testament of Eumanides* would stay sublime." Hence his attachment to the subject matter, to the conceptual side of art, as opposed to execution, arose from his adherence to such ideas and not (as is sometimes believed) from the preoccupations of a man of letters. Under the circumstances he might well have failed to appreciate those artists whose subject matter did not accord with such principles; but he was too good a judge of painting to fall into this trap. Read only his pages on Chardin : "Chardin n'est pas un peintre d'histoire, mais c'est un grand homme." As M. Seznec reminds us, for Diderot, "La peinture est l'art d'aller par l'entremise de l'âme" and Chardin paints (Diderot declares) "pas avec des couleurs mais avec le sentiment."

In reading the first three Salons, one is impressed by the justice of Diderot's observations. Modern opinion may not concur with his view that Deshayes was "le premier peintre de la Nation" or endorse his praise of Vien. On the other hand, how brilliantly he assesses Challe. In a note of no more than four paragraphs in the Salon of 1763 he savages the unfortunate painter with elegance and perception : the very first line, for instance, is of a supreme insolence, "Mais dites-moi, monsieur Challe, pourquoi êtes vous peintre ? ... Il y a trente ans et plus que vous faites le métier, et vous ne vous doutez pas de ce que c'est et vous mourrez sans vous en douter." However, Diderot was too good a critic to leave his victim without hope, and he rightly suggested that Challe should confine himself to executing views of Rome. The insolence of the last line matches that of the first. "Monsieur Challe, continuez de nous donner nos vues, mais ne peignez plus." Again, he fastened on the heavy colour of Carlo van Loo—another example of his astringent criticism.

Finally, Diderot had the ability to peer into the future and M. Seznec effectively suggests that certain of his passages, notably those on light and colour, anticipate the opinions of the Romantics and Delacroix. That he was able to see his own epoch in a true perspective and to keep his head, at a moment of considerable agitation in the artistic world, was a measure of his judgment ; all the more so, as his temperament might have led him in the wrong direction. "Il vaut encore mieux être extravagant que froid," were his words.

The secret of his success surely lay in his enthusiasm ; that and his natural good taste. One never doubts for one instant that Diderot enjoyed painting ; he responded to colour and form and he realized that certain themes could be best expressed in visual terms. It is his understanding of the essential properties of painting that makes his criticism so readable ; it helps to give it its pungency. Also, he was able to write a clear and concise language ; there are no ambiguities. He never went off into speculations that were unrelated to the problem he was discussing ; in fact, his comments are always connected with precise works of art. For such reasons, his salons are the healthiest reading for all practitioners of the same métier.

TWO PICTORIAL ART BOOKS

THE FEMALE NUDE IN EUROPEAN PAINTING

Introduction by
JEAN-LOUIS VAUDOYER

Nearly one hundred and fifty paintings – famous masterpieces and little known works of great documentary value – of the 'female nude', ranging from prehistory to the present day, are here reproduced. In the continuity and diversity which they display they constitute, within the chosen theme, a history of European painting. There are few periods that are not represented in this anthology, though it may be with a solitary work ; and relatively very few great artists are absent because, at least since the Renaissance, almost all painters have acknowledged the primacy of 'the nude' in the precise expression of the language of human forms. In his Introduction Jean-Louis Vaudoier has also provided a stimulating survey of the portrayal of the female nude in European painting.

45s. net.

FRENCH ART IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Edited by
STÉPHANE FANIEL

This superb volume is in itself an art gallery containing hundreds of illustrations in line and half-tone, including many plates in full colour, graphically portraying French art and all its facets during a richly productive century. Painters, silversmiths, woodcarvers, and the makers of furniture, carpets, ceramics, clocks and tapestries are represented, along with other craftsmen, in a pictorial survey fully evocative of the magnificent extravagance of this spacious age. Seen in such a comprehensive manner the extent of the contribution of French artists and craftsmen to the main stream of European cultural history is made plain. The text admirably matches the illustrations, and the book is a thing of beauty that will commend itself on sight to all art-lovers, connoisseurs and students of cultural history.

Ready 21 October.

6 guineas net.

LONGMANS, GREEN & CO LTD, 6 & 7 CLIFFORD STREET, LONDON W1

Book Society Recommendation

Till I End My Song

"Sweet Thames run softly, till I end my song"



by Robert Gibbings

Robert Gibbings returns to the Thames in this lovely companion volume to *Sweet Thames Run Softly*, now in its eleventh impression. *Till I End My Song* covers the bridges, locks, and weirs of the relevant stretch of the river, with rich human contacts. With 55 wood engravings and colour frontispiece by the author. 25s.

DENT

To be published on October 31st

LEONARDO DA VINCI

Size: 14½ in. × 10½ in. 524 pages
1,640 illustrations 12 colour plates

For the first time Leonardo's full achievement, both artistic and scientific, is presented to the public in a single volume. It contains a scholarly text dealing with every aspect of his life and work.

Price:

Before publication £10. 10

After publication £12. 12

THE CRESSET PRESS

DECORATIVE WROUGHT IRONWORK IN GREAT BRITAIN. By RAYMOND LISTER. 265 pp.+28 pl. Bell. 35s.

A NEW book on English wrought ironwork has long been wanted. Starkie Gardner's *Ironwork*, published by the Victoria and Albert Museum, though excellent at the time it was produced, had become so out of date that it could not be re-published after a simple editing. Maxwell Ayrton and Arnold Silcock's *Wrought Ironwork and its Decorative Use* is now nearly 30 years old and has never been revised.

Mr. Lister shares with Starkie Gardner the advantage of being able to write with a practical knowledge of the craft which he is describing. As a consequence, his chapter on "Technique" is excellent. The most substantial section of the book deals with architectural ironwork. The treatment of the history of medieval ironwork is inclined to be shallow and the suggestion that the decline in the use of fine wrought ironwork in the days of the Tudors was a delayed result of a concentration on the making of armour at the time of the Wars of the Roses will not bear a minute's consideration. It is notorious that England took this baronial struggle in its stride, and on the author's own showing the very best late medieval wrought ironwork was turned out in the long interval of 12 years between the battles of Tewkesbury and Bosworth.

Mr. Lister really gets into his stride when he reaches the classic age of English ironwork, which begins in the reign of Charles II. A lot of fresh information has come to light in the last 30 years about the great XVIIIth-century smiths, and Mr. Lister has an interesting discussion on the problem of the extent to which they were their own designers, borrowed from printed books of designs, or were chivvied about by architects. As evidence of the last, he illustrates Robert Bakewell's gate for Gibb's Radcliffe Camera at Oxford, which appears unbelievably prosaic when compared with the "birdcage" at Melbourne. It is symptomatic of the times that Mr. Lister carries his subject right through to the present day, and discusses understandingly the wrought ironwork of the latter half of the XIXth century.

The next chapter, on domestic ironwork, is rather more unequal, partly as a result of trying to bring in too much material. Little emphasis is laid on the superb locksmiths' work of the late XVIIth and early XVIIIth centuries, no specimen of which is illustrated. On the

other hand, Fig. 58 shows drawings of seven types of lighting appliances, three of which are trivial affairs in sheet metal and in no sense decorative. The book concludes with a useful glossary and bibliography. C. C. OMAN.

JOHN SINGER SARGENT. By CHARLES MERRILL MOUNT. Cresset Press. £1 10s.

THE brilliance of Sargent as a painter—invariably in eclipse by the movement of art fashions in the 32 years since his death—re-emerged from that shadow in the last Winter Exhibition at the Royal Academy. It is fitting that the centenary year of his birth should be marked by this resurgence of interest, and Mr. Mount's book is therefore timely. Himself an American portrait painter to whom Sargent was an ideal and inspiration, he is a fitting biographer, since he thus brings a painter's technical knowledge and understanding: a rare enough asset in artist-biographical writing. The book is certainly a deeply felt tribute and a labour of love.

The "but . . ." arises from this very virtue. The book is long, running to over 150,000 words; it is amazingly detailed, and where research has not supplied the facts the biographer has permitted a novelist's creativeness to give verisimilitude. For example, writing of the painting of the Madame Gautreau portrait which was to prove a decisive factor in Sargent's career, Mr. Mount says:

"He put a thin tone of light rose across it so that something of the dark glimmered through, then, feeling it too pink, added a trifle of cool green. 'Vast improvement!' he thought as he stood back from it. Turning it upside down on the easel, he went across the room again to look at it under his arm."

That single passage has at once the virtue and vice of the book: a painter's feeling and knowledge added to a garrulous narrative manner; for obviously Mr. Mount cannot know what happened in that studio at that moment. Nevertheless the facts are here, too: the sitters, the sequence of commissions, the character of the painter, the incidents of his career, much of his correspondence, and a catalogue of the important oils, year by year, with a note of present ownership. I would have liked more about the water colours, for I hold that Sargent made a splendid contribution in this medium. Those who share Mr. Mount's enthusiasm will enjoy this book. HORACE SHIPP.

THE WORLD'S GREATEST BOOKSHOP

FOYLES
* FOR BOOKS *

FAMED CENTRE FOR BOOKS on ART and COLLECTING

All new Books available on day of publication. Secondhand and rare Books on every subject. Stock of over three million volumes

Foyles have depts. for Handicraft Materials, Stationery, Gramophone Records, Music, Magazine Subscriptions

We BUY Books, Coins, Stamps

119-125 CHARING CROSS ROAD, LONDON, W.C.2

Gerrard 5660 (20 lines)

★ Open 9-6 (incl. Sats.)

Nearest Station: Tottenham Court Road

THE LIBRARY SHELF

EARLY BIBLE ILLUSTRATION. By JAMES STRACHAN. Cambridge University Press. 18s. 6d.

THE author of this book is a retired inspector of schools with, as he says, a special interest in and knowledge of mathematics and geography. It is with disarming modesty that he gives us, in his study of *Early Bible Illustrations*, proof of yet other scholastic attainments. In 1954 he assisted in the preparation of the 150th exhibition of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which contained a section relating to early printed bibles; and this naturally gave rise in his mind to the idea of writing a book on early bible illustration. It constitutes a thesis, with excellently reproduced woodcut illustrations of the Bible between 1450 and 1550, of which he gives no less than 126 examples. The last three of these contain one from the Latin Bible (Kerver), printed in Paris in 1562; the second from the English Geneva Bible (Rowland Hall), printed in 1560; and the last from the Bishop's Bible (Barker), printed in London in 1568.

Mr. Strachan supplies a list of useful references where the original illustrations may be examine. But the illustrations are so good that they serve the text adequately, and constitute a valuable study of a subject to which hitherto mostly only French and German scholars have devoted serious attention.

The printing of pictures from wooden blocks carved in relief is older than the printing of books from movable type. The earliest known prints of European origin, Mr. Strachan tells us, "are conventionally dated about 1415, and, as bookbinding was at that time a well-established art, it was an easy and natural development to make whole books of prints." Of course, not all of the "block-books," as they were called, are entirely biblical in content. The first printed bible in a modern European language was one in High German by Mentelin of Strasbourg in 1466. But as usually only clerks and scholars could read, the illustrations, which presented in pictorial symbolism the relationship between God and man, constituted the principle vehicle for the understanding of the biblical story.

Mr. Strachan has written a book of absorbing interest; and he wears his cloak of great learning with a simple grace that will have a wide appeal. The ease with which his mind moves through the cultural life of Europe in the XVth and

XVth centuries makes for most fascinating reading.

VICTOR RIENAECKER.

SATURN: AN ESSAY ON GOYA. By ANDRE MALRAUX. Phaidon. 47s. 6d.

IN brilliant generalizations, a synoptic method which draws upon extra-European sources, and a contrapuntal style which, without warning, becomes laconic, M. Malraux is saying something new. "If Italy had been aiming for centuries to bring man into harmony with himself, the aim of Spain had been to put him at variance. To the 'Christ, man made perfect' of Nicholas of Cusa, all the deep voices in Spain replied that man's only worth lay in what he owed to Christ. . . . For Goya, as for the Middle Ages, man had little value except to the extent that he expressed that which surpasses him." Or again, "the artist can only come to terms with fate [this was the Italian style], ignore it [the style of XVIIIth-century France], or indict it: Goya did not come to terms with it nor did he ignore it. It is not less in the nature of man to want to be immortal than to know that he is man."

As in the *Psychologie* the plates do not accompany the description of works but replace it ("one picture is worth a thousand words," says the Chinese proverb). There are 133 fascinating plates (18 in colour), including many new Goyas and some of Bosch, Bruegel, Mascagno and Rembrandt. This beautifully produced book, with large type (14 pt. Imprint) is indispensable. Two small points. Surely some of the *Caprichos* captions are ironically smiling *chiste*? Surely Goya was, rather more than M. Malraux implies, enjoying *himself*? Caricature is linked to Carnival and the masks of Italian Comedy; could not the *Saturn* have also been linked with medieval grotesques (for instance, the bracket of a monstrous head devouring a child, a caricature of Saturn, in the Xth-century Church of Mont Majour, near Nîmes) and their prototype (used as Typhons and Gorgons were by early Christian masons) the classical mask?

Artist first, historian second, supremely endowed with humanity, supremely questioning, never surrendering his creativeness, M. Malraux reveals Goya's secrets—"that man could be taken out of himself by other means than beauty" and that "to allow his genius to become apparent it was necessary that he should dare to give up aiming to please": the categorical imperative.

JOHN DALTON.

THE MODERNS AND THEIR WORLD

Introduced by
SIR JOHN
ROTHENSTEIN



There has long been a need for an authoritative survey of the rich field of modern painting at a price which everyone can afford. This gap has now been filled by this astonishingly low-priced yet lavish quarto volume, a companion to *The Impressionists and their World* (40,000 sold). It contains 96 full page gravure plates, 48 in full colour, printed in Switzerland, and a long essay by the Director of the Tate Gallery on the cultural and environmental influences which have played upon the outstanding men and movements in shaping 'modern' art. There are also short biographies of the painters, a note on each picture and a bibliography.

Among the artists whose work is included are: Picasso, Dufy, Rouault, Bonnard, Chagall, Braque, Klee, Modigliani, Kandinsky, Dali, Rivera, Matthew Smith, Ben Nicolson, Henry Moore and Graham Sutherland. Each plate is printed on cartridge paper and the volume is bound in heavy linen boards with a full colour wrapper.

12½" x 9" 128 pages 30s. net
(Publication date: October 31)

Phoenix

Through all bookshops
Published by Phoenix House
Ltd., 38 William IV Street,
London, W.C.2.

BATSFORD Books

LIVERPOOL PORCELAIN of the Eighteenth Century

by
KNOWLES BONEY

This work, important to students and collectors of English china-ware, incorporates unpublished material about the least known, but by no means least significant, of porcelain-making centres in this country. About 300 individual pieces are illustrated. The author was for many years Assistant Curator of the Liverpool Museum.

6 guineas net

ALEC TIRANTI

Constantin Brancusi

David Lewis. 56 pages text, 64 plates, sq. 8vo. cloth .. 18s.*

Ben Nicholson

J. P. Hodin. 36 pages text, 54 plates (2 in colour), sq. 8vo. .. 18s.*

The Golden Number

M. Borissavlievitch. Over 100 diagrams, 8vo., cloth .. 15s.*

Graphic Art of Japan

The Classical School. O. E. Holloway. Over 100 illustrations .. 30s.†

English Romanesque Lead Sculpture

G. Zarnecki. 54 pages text, 72 plates, 8vo., cloth .. 15s.†

Form in Gothic

W. Worringer. New edition of the famous classic .. 25s.†

World of Abstract Art

By Seuphor and others. Profusely illustrated. 4to., cloth .. 63s.†

* In the press.

† Ready.

CHINA TRADE PORCELAIN. JOHN GOLDSMITH PHILLIPS. The Winfield Foundation and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Distributed by Phaidon Books, Ltd., London. 5 gns.

THIS is a book for the collector and student interested in Chinese export porcelain, and Mr. Phillips, who is Curator of Renaissance Art at the Metropolitan Museum, has produced a work which is both informative and entertaining—something of a rarity in ceramic literature.

The volume is well produced, and the facts set out with admirable clarity. The illustrations, taken from the collection of the late Helena Woolworth McCann, are copious, and reproduction is excellent. The ancillary illustrations taken from other sources enhance the value of the work.

Interest in Chinese porcelain made for export has always been considerably greater in the United States than in this country. It is difficult to regard most of it as more than a by-path for the student, since these wares are no more than copies of European designs.

The forms are usually based on European originals in porcelain, faience, or metalwork, and it is obvious that the Chinese were distinctly unhappy in their copies of the *rococo* style, the forms being clumsily wrought and heavy in comparison with the originals.

Nevertheless, the student can cull from the mass of surviving Chinese export wares many amusing sidelights on the history not only of the porcelain trade, but on commercial relations between East and

West during the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries.

In addition to the black and white plates, there are 17 plates in colour which reproduce the originals with considerable fidelity.

GEORGE SAVAGE.

THE WORLD OF ABSTRACT ART.

Edited by the American Abstract Artists. Alec Tiranti Ltd. 3 guineas.

THE organization known as "American Abstract Artists" was founded twenty-one years ago to arrange group exhibitions of the work of its members and obtain a better hearing in the U.S. for the aims of non-figurative artists in general. The latest of its publications is intended as a survey of recent developments, but is chiefly interesting as an attempt on the part of some "orthodox" abstractionists to deal with the crisis in the movement brought about by action painting.

The book is very nicely produced, and the fifty-three miniature colour plates of the paintings and sculpture which comprised the A.A.A. exhibition held in 1956 make charming marginal decorations.

The four full-page colour plates of works by Mondrian, Gabo, Nicholson and Hartung are presumably intended to represent the editors' sense of the proper boundaries of abstraction, and it was no doubt good tactics on their part to choose a free abstraction by Hartung rather than one from Kandinsky's greatest period: it would have been difficult to damn the action painters with faint praise if one of Kandinsky's semi-automatic and recklessly spontaneous masterpieces had been too

readily accessible to the reader. Kandinsky's name is, of course, frequently and reverentially invoked throughout the book, and one of his geometrical abstracts of the thirties is reproduced in half-tone.

The texts, with one exception, have been provided by painters and sculptors, and include reports from England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and various American centres, interviews with Gabo and Arp, an account of the ups and downs of the A.A.A., and a dialogue by Michel Seuphor, the redoubtable biographer of Mondrian. Perhaps the most interesting contribution is an essay on "The Oriental Tradition and Abstract Art" by the Mondrianesque painter Charmian von Wiegand, who states her case against the action painters with subtlety and fairness: "All abstract expressionist groups," she writes, "owe their origin, consciously or unconsciously, to the early, explosive Kandinsky, [but] whereas he moved from Monet to an art of liberated colour and space, they are moving from his achievement back to Monet and back beyond that to the natural image." At the other extreme, the sculptor Arp welcomes the action painters with open arms, and perhaps the back of his hand: in answer to the somewhat tight-lipped question, "What is your opinion of the new approach that finds composition demoded and recognizes only the momentary impact of creation?" he replies: "I imagine the whole world will be playing it in the end. Was it not the poet Lautréamont who demanded a poetry that everyone could write and not one alone."

ROBERT MELVILLE.

INTERIORS

MARGARET and
ALEXANDER POTTER

Traces the changes in decorative styles and furniture in the English home from mediaeval times to the present day. There are drawings on every page—scholarly, accurate, full of beauty, liveliness and wit.

Coloured and line illustrations

15s. net

CRUSADER CASTLES

ROBIN FEDDEN and
JOHN THOMPSON

An enlarged edition of this celebrated survey of the legacy of magnificent defensive architecture that the Crusaders built in the Near East. Much new material, including the Castles of Cilicia, from research on the spot by both authors has been added.

Half-tone and line illustrations

18s. net

JOHN MURRAY

The Concise Encyclopedia of English Pottery and Porcelain

WOLF MANKOWITZ & R. G. HAGGAR

This Encyclopedia will supersede existing works as a reference book and aid to identification. It gives authoritative and detailed information on factories, manufacturers, artists, processes, materials, terminology and potters' and artists' marks. Each factory's products are carefully described.

Illustrations: 24 plates in full colour, 160 pages of monochrome photographs, hundreds of line drawings of marks and a doublespread of embossed marks. Embossed title-page. End-papers in four colours.

Just Published.

6 guineas net.

ANDRE DEUTSCH

12-14 Carlisle Street, Soho Square, London W 1

SALE ROOM NOTES

CHRISTIE'S. The season began on October 1st with an important three-day sale of furniture and works of art belonging to the late Mrs. Alice Pleydell-Bouverie, which realized £27,919. The following are the more important of the sales to be held in October:

October 14th: Oriental porcelain, including a pair of Canton enamel wall lights with Louis XV ormolu branches. English and Continental porcelain will be sold on October 21st.

October 24th: English and Continental Furniture, including an important English serpentine mahogany commode c. 1760, a pair of William and Mary upright mirrors, a Chippendale mahogany dressing-table of unusual design, a Louis XVI marquetry commode stamped J. Caumont, and a small marquetry bureau de dame. Other furniture sales on October 17th and 31st.

October 25th: Fine pictures by Old Masters, including: The Mountebank, by P. LONGHI; The Gascoigne Family, by FRANCIS HAYMAN; a Portrait of a Gentleman, attributed to JOSSE VAN CLEVE; two portraits by GAINSBOROUGH of Mrs. Townley Balfour and John Leigh; two landscapes by G. DE HEUSCH, signed and dated 1622; a Madonna and Child, signed by GIOVANNI DI NICCOLO MANSUETI; and a View of Richmond, by ANTONIO JOLLI. November 1st: Modern Pictures and Drawings, including a portrait of Mme Benard, by VUILLARD; Le Petit Déjeuner, by BONNARD; Cliffs at Etretat, 1886, by MONET; the Statue of Duchesne at Dieppe and St. Mark's, Venice (Fig. 1), by SICKERT; Carnations, 1887, by FANTIN-LATOURE; a Snow Scene and a River Scene, by CORNELIUS KRIEGHOFF, and works by UTRILLO, MATTHEW SMITH, CONSTANTIN GUYS, and others.

SOTHEBY'S. October 18th. Works of art, clocks, Oriental carpets, textiles, and fine English furniture, including three needlework panels from the famous Oxburgh Hall bed hangings. Worked by Mary Queen of Scots and Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury (Bess of Hardwick), these were bought by the Victoria and Albert Museum and are now on loan to Oxburgh (National Trust). It is not known how these panels became separated from the rest.



Fig. 1. W. R. SICKERT. St. Mark's, Venice. Oil on panel. 18½ x 23½ in. Christie's sale, November 1st.

October 23rd: XVIIIth-century and modern drawings and paintings, including The Trapper's Return and The St. Lawrence River in Winter, by CORNELIUS KRIEGHOFF.

October 24th: Fine English and foreign silver and plate, including a George II tea kettle and lampstand elaborately chased by Ayme Videau, 1741, an unusual set of four George II candlesticks by Frederick Kandler, 1765, in the "Gothic" style, and an Elizabeth I bell-shaped salt, marked for 1601.

October 25th. Important French furniture, Oriental carpets, ormolu, clocks, works of art, and tapestries, including a set of six XVIIth-century Brussels tapestries depicting "The Hunt of the Calydonian Bear," a set of eight panels of Ch'ia Ch'ing painted wall paper, and two sets of Louis XV fauteuils.

October 29th. Important Chinese pottery and porcelain, including a magnificent XVth-century large blue and white circular flask, inspired by a XIIIth-century Mosul bronze canteen. The remainder of the sale consists largely of the well-known collection of Mrs. Blanco White, and is divided into groups of early wares, brown glazed wares of the Sung dynasty, celadons, and an important group of Ting, Ch'ing Pai and Chün Yao.

October 30th. Old Master paintings and drawings.

October 31st. English and Continental silver and plate, including Commonwealth and Charles I seal-top spoons, a George II tray by Louis Pantin, 1742; a George II soup tureen and cover by Thomas Hemming, 1759, and also Scandinavian, French, German and Portuguese pieces.

November 1st. French glass paperweights, oriental carpets, English and Continental furniture, including a rare Baccarat dark blue overlay weight, and a fine St. Louis apple-green encased overlay weight.

PARKE-BERNET GALLERIES, New York. The Georges Lucy Collection of modern French paintings, XVIIIth-century French furniture and objects of art will be sold on November 7th, 8th and 9th. The collection is described in a sumptuously produced catalogue and may be regarded as one of the most important ever to be sold in the United States. The pictures include works by all the leading Impressionists and the most fashionable painters of the school of Paris.

Sloane Street Galleries

ESTABLISHED 1915

BELGRAVIA 3417

ORIENTAL CARPET SPECIALISTS

Extensive Selection Available - Inspection Invited

EXPERT CLEANING AND REPAIR SERVICE MAINTAINED

ESTIMATES FREE

Specialists in plain fitted carpets, with a choice of over 100 shades

15 SLOANE STREET, LONDON, S.W.1

Register of London Picture Dealers

Gallery

Specialities

APPLEBY BROTHERS

27 WILLIAM IV STREET, LONDON, W.C.2

M. BERNARD

21 RYDER STREET, S.W.1

OLAF BLAYNEY BARNETT

BELGRAVIA 6318
KINNERTON GALLERY, 11 MOTCOMB ST., S.W.1

ALFRED BROD, LTD.

36 SACKVILLE STREET, PICCADILLY, W.1

NORBERT FISCHMAN GALLERY

26 OLD BOND STREET, LONDON, W.1

Paintings of all Schools—Speciality, Large Pictures

The Finest Paintings and Drawings of all Schools

Annigoni, Brangwyn and others
Paintings and Drawings from 1700 to 1956

Fine Paintings by the XVIIth Century Dutch Masters

Old Masters

(Carried on overleaf)

Register of London Picture Dealers—continued

Gallery	Specialities
FORES LTD. 123 NEW BOND STREET, W.1 MAYfair 5319	Old and Modern Sporting Paintings, Drawings and Prints
FROST & REED, LTD. 41 NEW BOND STREET, W.1	Paintings by Old and Modern Masters Old Engravings and Modern Colour Prints
FINE ART SOCIETY LIMITED 148 NEW BOND STREET, W.1	Paintings and Water-colours of the XIXth and XXth centuries Specialists in Early English Water-colours
WILLIAM HALLSBOROUGH LTD. 20 PICCADILLY ARCADE, S.W.1	Old Masters
THE HANOVER GALLERY 32a ST. GEORGE STREET, HANOVER SQUARE, W.1	Paintings and Sculpture by European Masters of the XXth Century
ARTHUR JEFFRESS (PICTURES) 28 DAVIES STREET, W.1	XIXth and XXth Century Paintings of Fantasy and Sentiment
E. & G. KAPLAN LTD. 6 DUKE STREET, ST. JAMES'S, S.W.1 WHIttehall 8665	Old and Modern Masters
PAUL LARSEN 43 DUKE STREET, ST. JAMES'S, S.W.1	Fine Paintings by Old Masters of all Schools
THE LEFEVRE GALLERY 30 BRUTON STREET, W.1	XIXth and XXth Century French Paintings
LEGGATT BROS. 30 ST. JAMES'S STREET, S.W.1	English Paintings of the XVIIIth and XIXth Centuries
LEGER GALLERIES 13 OLD BOND STREET, W.1	Old Masters of the English and Continental Schools, XIVth to XIXth Centuries, and Early English Water-colours
G. M. LOTINGA LTD. 57 NEW BOND STREET, W.1	Old and Modern Masters
JOHN MANNING 8 BURY STREET, ST. JAMES'S S.W.1 TRAFalgar 2606	Old and Modern Drawings of the English and Continental Schools
MARLBOROUGH FINE ART LTD. 17-18 OLD BOND STREET, W.1 HYDe Park 6195	Finest Old Masters French Impressionists and Contemporary Artists
O'HANA GALLERY 13 CARLOS PLACE, GROSVENOR SQUARE, W.1	Paintings, Drawings and Coloured Etchings— Orovida until October 18th. Paintings from Andalusia— Jo. Jones, October 22nd–November 10th
OLD MASTERS GALLERIES (WENGRAF) LTD. 21 DAVIES STREET, W.1	Early Italian, Flemish and Spanish Schools
THE PARKER GALLERY 2 ALBEMARLE STREET, W.1	Marine, Military, Sporting and Topographical Paintings and Prints; Old Maps, Ship Models, Weapons and Curios
ROLAND, BROWSE & DELBANCO 19 CORK STREET, W.1	French Paintings & Drawings of the XIXth & XXth Centuries Old Masters and Contemporary Art
EUGENE SLATTER 30 OLD BOND STREET, W.1	Dutch and Flemish Masters
EDWARD SPEELMAN LTD. EMPIRE HOUSE, 175 PICCADILLY, W.1 HYDe Park 0657	Old Master Paintings
ARTHUR TOOTH & SONS 31 BRUTON STREET, W.1	Old and Modern Pictures of International Value for Private Collectors and Public Galleries
WILDENSTEIN & CO., LTD. 147 NEW BOND STREET, W.1	Paintings, Drawings, Sculpture by the Finest Masters